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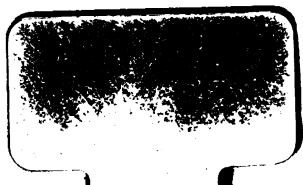
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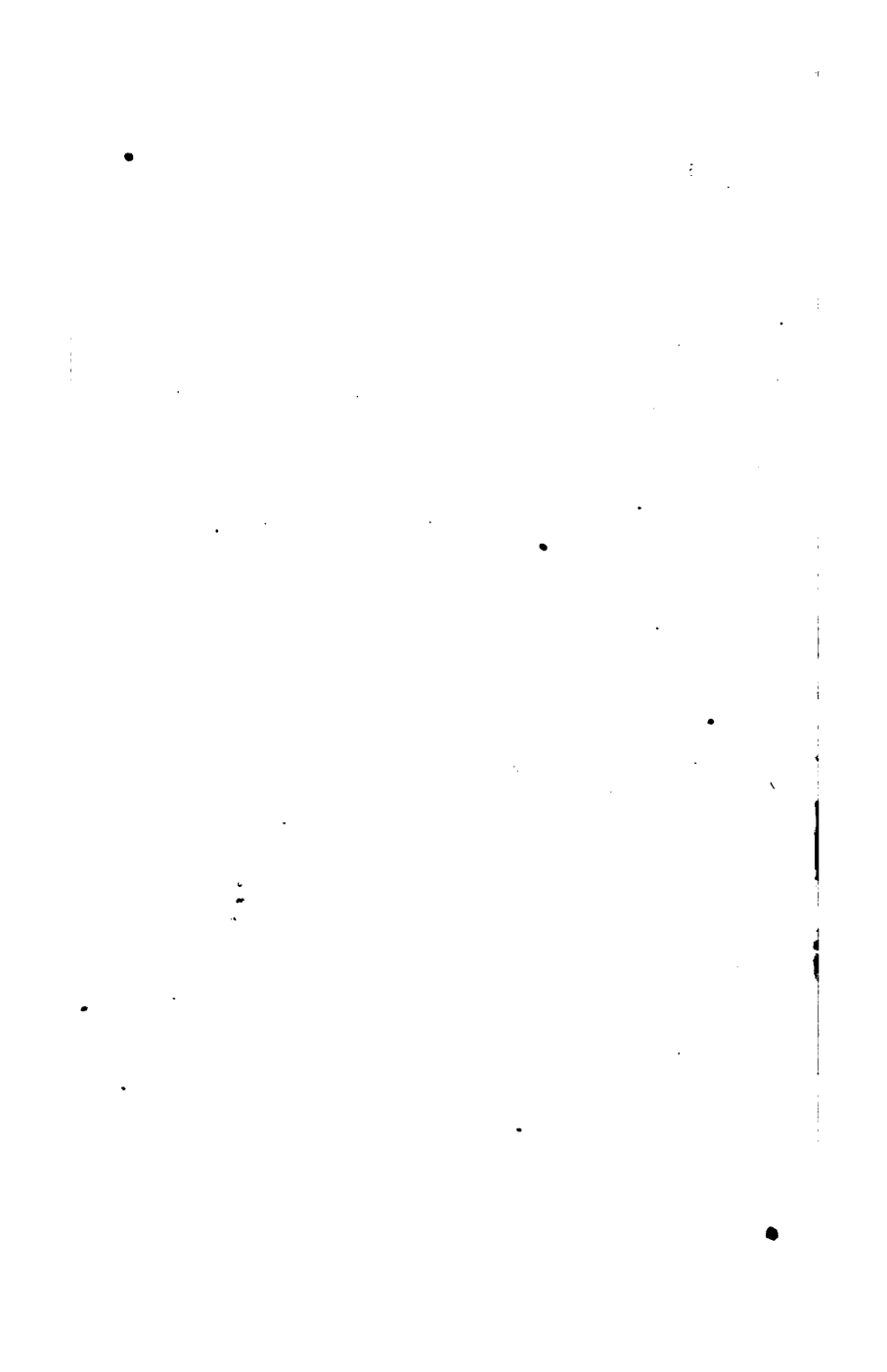
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# CHRISTIAN CONSOLATIONS;

TAUGHT FROM

FIVE HEADS IN RELIGION:

FAITH, HOPE, THE HOLY SPIRIT, PRAYER, THE  
SACRAMENTS.

BY

JOHN HACKET, D.D.

BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY.

A NEW EDITION,

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A Short Account of the Author.

~~~~~  
"SERVE GOD AND BE CHEERFUL"

*Ep. Hacket's Motto.*

~~~~~  
LONDON:

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PORTMAN SQUARE.

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[Lichfield Cathedral.]

JOHN HACKET, sometime Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, whose name is prefixed to this treatise, was born in the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields, in the Strand, near the place where Exeter House formerly stood, on the first day of September, A. D. 1592. His father, Andrew Hacket, a native of Scotland, was a senior burgess of the borough of Westminster, and afterwards keeper of the robes to Prince Henry, son of James the First. Being, as Wood reports of him, a zealous Protestant, he took great care of the education of this his only son, and sent him at a very early age to the College School, Westminster; where his promising talents and love for learning gained him the kind regard of his master, Mr. Richard Ireland. At this time the Dean of Westminster was that exemplary man, and ornament of the church

of England in life and doctrine, Dr. Lancelot Andrews, afterwards successively Bishop of Chichester, Ely, and Winchester. It was the custom of this good divine, when any necessary occasion required the absence of Mr. Ireland from the school, to take his place and examine the scholars; and at such times he was not slow to discover the early promise of young Hacket, whom he took into his particular favour, and continued to shew him kindness from that period till the time of his own death.

In the year 1608, Hacket was elected, with Mr. George Herbert, afterwards so well known as a pattern for christian pastors and as a sacred poet, to Trinity College, Cambridge: and Dr. Thomas Neville, the master of the college, who gave him the appointment, is said to have been so impressed with a sense of his merit, that he declared to his father, "he would rather carry him on his back to Cambridge, than lose him from his college." He was there so much noted for his painful studies, sober life, and great proficiency in learning, that he was shortly elected Fellow on that foundation; and continuing there for a few years in the charge of pupils, was in high reputation as a tutor. In 1618, he was

ordained by Dr. John King, bishop of London, a skilful divine and promoter of missions to the new English settlements in America, who seems to have intended his preferment; but in 1621 he was induced to accept an offer of a chaplaincy to Dr. John Williams, bishop of Lincoln, afterwards archbishop of York, keeper of the Great Seal. By this prelate he was recommended to be chaplain to King James, who in 1624 preferred him to the rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and afterwards added to it the parsonage of Cheam, in Surrey. These two livings he held, till the Rebellion broke out in 1642, being constantly resident at one of them; and at his church of Holborn he was distinguished as well for his excellent preaching as for his good order in his parochial charge. As a proof of his activity and zeal, it is related that, finding the church in much decay, he eagerly solicited his great friends to contribute to the rebuilding, and had obtained some thousands of pounds for that purpose: but the members of the Long Parliament, chiefly consisting of Presbyterians, most iniquitously seized upon that fund, as they did also on a large sum of money collected for the repair of St. Paul's cathedral, to carry on their rebellious war against King Charles.

At the beginning of these troubles Dr. Hacket, who was now archdeacon of Bedford, and canon residentiary of St. Paul's, was diligent in promoting every effort that was made for peace; and consented to be named as one of a committee, with several eminent bishops and presbyters, to consider certain reforms then proposed in the liturgy and government of the church. While he was thus employed, a Bill being brought before the House of Commons for the abolition of the cathedral clergy, he was chosen by the heads of that body of clergy to plead their cause at the bar of the house. He made his appearance there on the 12th of May, 1641, where he spoke with such persuasion in defence of choral music, and in praise of the noble edifices supported by cathedral institutions, and the encouragement thus afforded to scriptural preaching and sound learning, that for a time the spoliation then meditated was deferred—the authors of the measure foreseeing that if it had been put to the vote, a large majority would have refused their sanction to the act of sacrilege. But shortly afterwards, the public confusion and violence still increasing, the bishops were deprived of those votes in the legislature, which they had enjoyed from the first conversion of

these kingdoms to the christian faith; and Dr. Hacket, flying from the metropolis, where the laws gave him no protection, retreated for a time to Cheam, which he seems to have kept during the Usurpation. His living of St. Andrew's and his dignities were taken from him, and at one period he was imprisoned by the rebel army under the Earl of Essex; but the committee of the Long Parliament, then sitting in Surrey, and labouring for the removal of *Scandalous Ministers*, (a name given to all such as were loyal to their king and true to their church,) were unable to find any pretext for ejecting him. He continued to use the Liturgy of the Church of England, till its public use was forbidden by the usurpers.

He was more fortunate than the majority of sufferers in those evil days in having his life spared to the Restoration, when he was first appointed by Lord Clarendon to the bishopric of Gloucester; but declining it, in about a year afterwards was promoted to the see of Lichfield. At this time he was near seventy years of age, and had been the father of a large family, which at such a period of privation could not have added much to his worldly wealth. But the conduct of the good man in his episcopal charge,

did not disgrace the fair unblemished reputation with which he had previously lived. The comely cathedral church of Lichfield had been reduced by the civil wars almost to a heap of ruins: the stone roof, and the timber and lead above, the glass and iron from the windows, the organ and all the internal decorations, were completely destroyed, or carried off among the spoils. The loyalists had used it as a garrison for the king, and a marksman from the roof had killed, with a musket shot, the rebel general, Lord Brook, as he was leading his troop to summon them to surrender.\* Enraged at this loss, his followers pointed their artillery at the building, battered down the spire, and a great part of the fabric; two thousand shot of great ordnance, and fifteen hundred hand-grenades, having been discharged against it before it surrendered. This was a comfortless spectacle to the old bishop when he entered on his new promotion; but the next morning after his arrival, he set his own carriage-horses to work, with other teams, to carry away

\* —————fanatic Brook

The fair cathedral storm'd and took;  
But thanks to God and good St. Chad,

A guerdon meet the rebel had. *Sir Walter Scott.*

the rubbish; and as soon as it was cleared, procured builders and artizans to restore the pile. In this he was so successful, contributing a great part of the expense from his own bounty, and aided by benefactions from the gentry of the neighbouring counties, that before his death he saw the whole church more complete than before, the stone roof set up, and every injury of the civil wars repaired. He also laid out a large sum in repairing his house of residence at Lichfield, that of his predecessors having been destroyed in the same time of rebellion, and did much to settle a pious and laborious clergy in his diocese; not allowing his age to be a plea for indulgence, but setting a good example to them of constant preaching. The people of his charge received him, as he travelled round to his visitations, with great marks of popular esteem; and thousands came to receive at his hands the long neglected rite of confirmation. The worthy bishop, having dedicated the restored cathedral on Christmas eve, 1669, died on the 28th of October, 1670. He was buried in his cathedral, where a handsome monument was erected to his memory by his son Sir Andrew Hacket, sometime one of the masters in Chancery. The tradition of the place says, that having, as the



last act of the repairs, raised a great bell to its place in the steeple of the cathedral, the first knell it sounded was for his own peaceful departure.

The only portion of his writings, which is known to have been published under his name, is "A Century of Sermons," which had been preached by him; to which is prefixed a short account of his life, by the editor, Thomas Plume, D. D. afterwards archdeacon of Rochester, fol. 1676. It now is thought proper to revive his claim to the beautiful old treatise here presented to the christian reader; as, though there must remain some uncertainty about the true author, it is presumed that no writer of the same rank and reputation has so good a claim to it as Bishop Hacket.

It was first published anonymously, as it is stated by Antony Wood, in 1671, the year following the bishop's death, with the Address to the Reader here reprinted, in which it is said to have been "written by a late reverend prelate," "for the private use of a noble and religious lady." Wood, in the first edition of his *Fasti Oxonienses*, ann. 1616, had ascribed the work to Bishop Hacket, but in a subsequent edition supposes it to be the production of a

Dr. Robert Hacket, whose picture he states to be prefixed. But the copies of the old edition, one of which is in the Bodleian Library, and another in the library of the Rev. H. H. Norris, of Hackney, contain no portrait. This book is so exceedingly scarce, that Bishop Heber, in his search for the remains of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, was unable to meet with any other than the Bodleian copy. The editor, whoever he was, expressly says that it was written by a late reverend *prelate*, to which description Dr. *Robert Hacket* is not known to answer. It seems most probable that Wood was not perfectly informed on the subject of this book, and had not himself seen a copy of it, as he elsewhere has set down the same title at length among the treatises he assigns to Bishop Taylor.

As to Bishop Taylor's claim to it, it is true that the late Bishop Heber was induced to ascribe it to him, as he does also another treatise entitled "*Contemplations on the State of Man.*" This too he might have found in Wood's list as a posthumous work of Taylor's; but it is falsely assigned to him. It did not appear till near twenty years after Bishop Taylor's death; and bears plain internal marks of having been composed by a pious Romanist, probably a Jesuit.

A short time after the appearance of the "Christian Consolations," in Bishop Heber's edition of Jeremy Taylor, the late Alexander Knox, Esq. of Dublin, in his Correspondence with Bishop Jebb, (vol. ii. pp. 508, 513,) pointed out the mistake into which Bishop Heber had fallen. He shewed that the date of the treatise could not be, as Heber had supposed, near the close of Taylor's life, as the treatise itself speaks of the Usurpation as then dominant: and he shewed that in one or two instances it was inconsistent with Taylor's interpretation of certain texts of Scripture. It appears that Bishop Jebb was at that time in possession of information which assigned it to Bishop Hacket: and to him it is assigned in a manuscript note in Mr. Norris's copy.

Mr. Knox proceeds to point out a few passages in this treatise, which, as they seemed to oppose his favourite Wesleyan doctrine of spiritual perfection, he accuses of Calvinism. For this, although every opinion of Mr. Knox is entitled to respect, it appears that there is no ground. The object of the treatise, as stated in the Introduction, is to comfort those Christians who are led by the spirit of love, and to relieve that "heaviness," which is sometimes felt by the

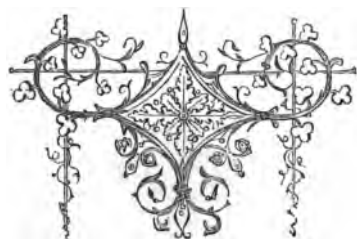
most devout souls, from the “ manifold temptations” of this life (1 Pet. i. 6.); to remove the despondency which such persons are disposed to feel most, as they are most sensible of their own daily infirmities. Of course any cautions against antinomian abuses would be out of place in such a treatise; and of the passages selected by Mr. Knox, the remark in answer to the pagan writer Zosimus (p. 17) against Constantine, is precisely the same as is made, in answer to the same writer, by Dr. Isaac Barrow, a divine never suspected of Calvinism, in his fifth Sermon on the Creed. (Works, vol. IV. p. 136.) The other, in which the writer of this treatise refers to Rom. vii. 25, involves too difficult a question for discussion in this brief notice. It is probable that Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Kettlewell, and other eminent divines, have adopted the true interpretation of that chapter, following the best Greek fathers, St. Basil and St. Chrysostom; with whom St. Augustine sometimes seems to agree, but sometimes in controversy uses the texts in a different sense. The author of the “ Consolations” (p. 40) says that he apprehends the mind of the apostle to be to refresh our guilty consciences, by the doctrine, that a regenerate man is not obnoxious to con-

demnation, though his flesh, upon some temptations, make him the servant of sin, because still in his mind he serves the law of God. And this is consistent with St. Augustine's interpretation of v. 25. (Lib. de LXXXIII. Quæst. c. 66.) who says, that St. Paul, after speaking in the earlier verses of the chapter of a man's condition without the knowledge of the law, and then under the law without the knowledge of grace, comes in this verse to begin describing a third step in his spiritual progress, when the desires of the flesh are still struggling for mastery, but do not any longer carry him into captivity. It does not follow, therefore, from our author's application of this text, that he considered the other verses, from 14 to 24, to describe the conflict of a Christian renewed to holiness: he probably would have interpreted the whole chapter as St. Augustine does. The inconsistency of the common Calvinistic interpretation is well exposed in Kettlewell's excellent treatise on Christian Obedience, b. iii. c. iv.

It might be expected that Bishop Hacket's title to this treatise might be further confirmed by a comparison of passages with his acknowledged writings. But though some proofs of this kind have occurred to the writer of this notice,

he is not sure that they are sufficient to decide the question; and it is well known that in attempting to judge by style the best critics have been deceived.





## **To the Reader.**

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THIS manual of Christian Consolations, derived from Five Heads of great importance in Religion, was written by a late Reverend Prelate of our Church, and is now printed according to his own copy.

The papers were presented by him to a person of honour, for whose private use they were designed : but, as the noblest spirits are most communicative, that noble and religious lady was pleased to impart them for the good also of others. We read in the Evangelists, how that the Holy Jesus, who “went about doing good” (that is the short, but full, character which Saint Peter<sup>1</sup> gives of him), did, by a miracle of mercy, bless five loaves to the feeding of a very great multitude. And may the same Almighty goodness bless and prosper whatsoever spiritual good is contained in these FIVE HELPS AND DIRECTIONS FOR A CHRISTIAN’S COMFORT, to the refreshing and

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 38.



strengthening of such souls as truly hunger and thirst after God! May the serious and devout readers taste and see how good the Lord is, that his loving-kindness is better than life,—and that the light of his countenance, the sense of his favour, is infinitely more heart-cheering, and brings with it a truer and larger satisfaction, than the increase of “corn, and wine, and oil,”<sup>1</sup> doth to the men of this world, who only or chiefly “mind earthly things,” and unwisely place their felicity in the fading and empty enjoyments of this present life.

It is a good thing, then, that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord; for, “he is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.”<sup>2</sup>

He who is the God of love, and even <sup>3</sup>Love itself; he who is the everflowing fountain of goodness, will not fail to fill the hungry with good things. Such a Christian hath meat to eat which the world knows not of; he feeds on the hidden manna: he hath (as St. Austin said of St. Ambrose) a secret power of taste within his heart, and with this he doth feed on the relishing joys of the bread of heaven. “The Father of the world, who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, giving to all their meat in due season;”<sup>4</sup> “he is as ready to fulfil the desire of them that fear

<sup>1</sup> Psalm iv.    <sup>2</sup> Lam. iii.    <sup>3</sup> 1 John iv.    <sup>4</sup> Psalm cxlv.

him ; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”<sup>1</sup> And here, from the character and qualification of the persons (them that fear him, and them that walk uprightly) it highly concerns us to observe, and to lay it to heart, that a sincere desire and serious endeavour to fear God and walk uprightly, is a necessary and indispensable condition to qualify and make us meet for the receiving of the best of divine favours and blessings. We must first walk in the fear of the Lord, if we would walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, as these two are set together.<sup>2</sup> If we would have the Spirit to be our comforter, we must follow the Spirit as our guide and Counsellor. If we would find rest unto our souls, we must take Christ’s yoke upon us,<sup>3</sup> the yoke of his precepts, which are all holy, and just, and good. A state of inward comfort and true tranquillity of spirit can never be secured and preserved, but by a continual care to walk before God, in faithful obedience to his will in all things.

For “there is no peace to the wicked,”<sup>4</sup> as is twice expressed by the noble prophet Isaiah ;<sup>5</sup> but “great peace have they that love thy law,”<sup>6</sup> saith the royal Psalmist, the man after God’s own heart, who herein spake his own experience ; and elsewhere, “Mark

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ix. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xlviii. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. lviii. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm cxix. 165.

the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."<sup>1</sup> While he lives, he lives in peace, his soul dwells at ease ; he feels an unspeakable joy and pleasure within, upon the sense of his doing his duty, and being faithful in obedience to his Lord and Master in heaven. And when he dies, he departs in peace,<sup>2</sup> and shall "enter into peace," and "into the joy of his Lord."<sup>3</sup> Here he "tastes how sweet the Lord is ;" but there "he shall be abundantly satisfied with the plenty of God's house, and made to drink of the river of his pleasures."<sup>4</sup> "The meek shall eat and be satisfied, and their heart shall live for ever."<sup>5</sup> And so full and complete shall be their joy and satisfaction, that "they shall neither hunger nor thirst any more ; for the Lamb shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."<sup>6</sup> This is the happy portion of those souls who have the Lord for their God, with whom "there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures," most pure and permanent, "for evermore."

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxxvii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lvii.

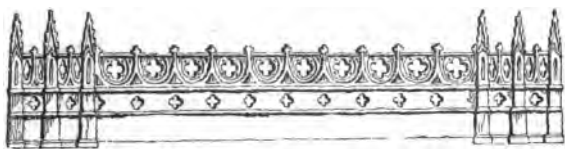
<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxv.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xxxvi.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. vii.





## Introduction.

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THE work of the ministry consists in two things, in threatenings or comforts. The first is useful for the greatest part of Christians, who are led by the spirit of bondage, and fear to do evil, because of wrath to come, which grows out of love to themselves. The second is fit for the best Christians, that are led by the spirit of love: who endeavour to do righteousness, because they love righteousness, and to be like unto God, who, they know, is only good (which grows out of the spirit of adoption), and obey as sons and daughters, and not as servants.

Our Saviour and his apostles insist sometimes upon the former way, threatening the impenitent, yet qualifying it with tidings of peace, if they return and amend their lives. For sharpness must be applied, according to the power which the Lord has given us, for edification, and not for destruction.<sup>1</sup> The same apostle propounds both in the former epistle, "Shall I come unto you with a rod? or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"<sup>2</sup> Which latter is most suitable to the Gospel, to proclaim peace on earth, and good will towards men; and when James and John would

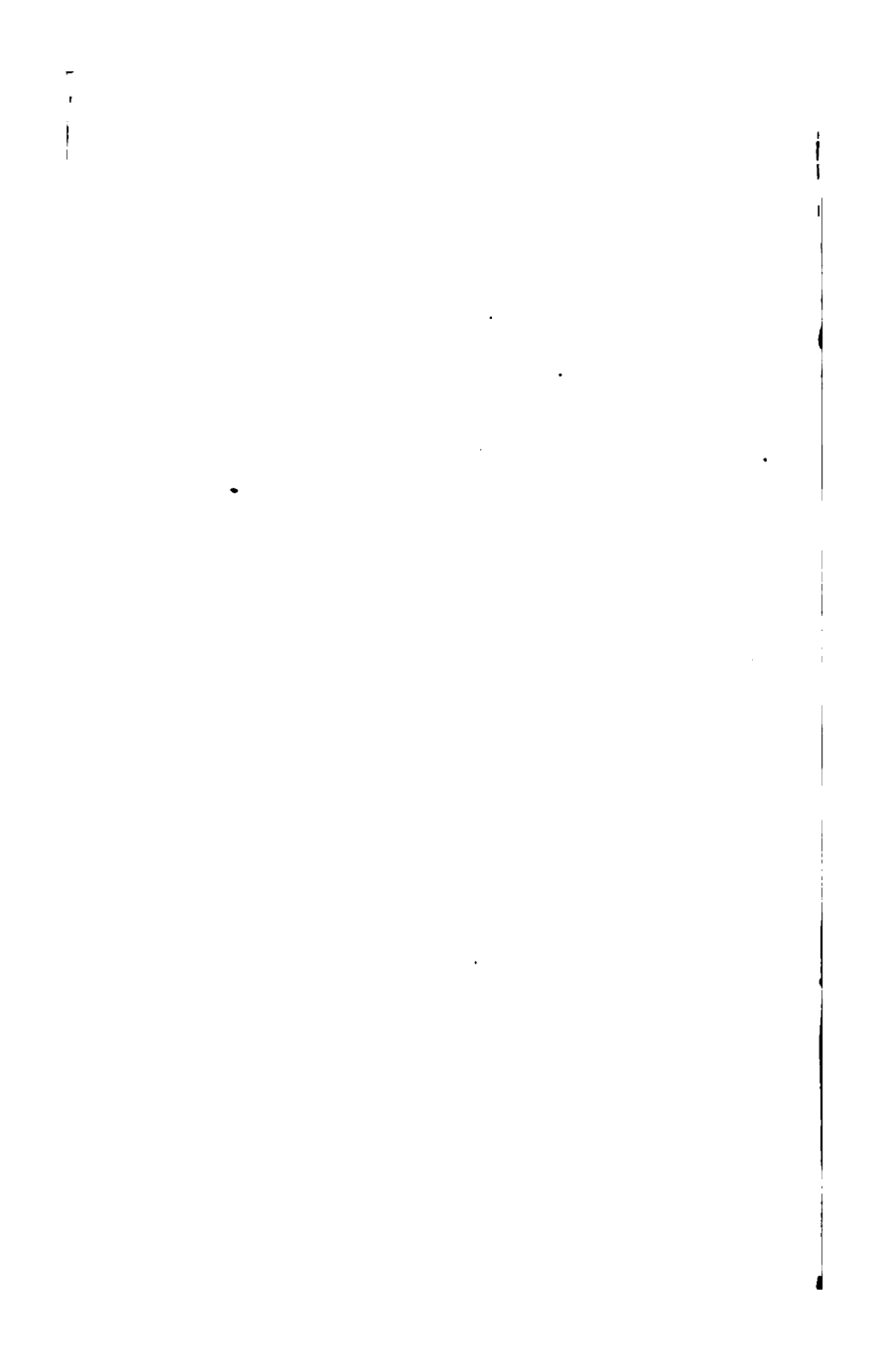
<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 21.

have had fire to come down from heaven upon the Samaritans, Christ reproveth them, saying, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them:"<sup>1</sup> and St. Paul, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." And, surely, there is cause to apply a cluster of consolation against a few grains of terror: 1. Because we are all concluded under sin, and the guilt is ever present unto us. 2. Because of the weakness of the graces that are in us; not that they are weak, but that human corruption is mixed with them. 3. Because of the strength and manifoldness of temptations. 4. Because we are to be exercised with the sufferance of the cross, and we are infirm to bear it. Lastly, because little is communicated to us, at the present, of that reward we look for; least of all, is any share of it present and before our eyes. Forasmuch then, as there are so many in-draughts that break into our heart, to make us sick of sorrow and fear, let us seek comfort from God, who hath left no disease without a remedy to cure it, "who healeth all thy diseases."<sup>2</sup> I say, it is to be sought from God, lest we light upon them that tell false dreams, and comfort in vain.<sup>3</sup> The right place for it must be the word of God, as it is:<sup>4</sup> "that we, through patience, and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope." Which comfort scattered up and down in that holy book, and not cast all in a lump together, by searching it diligently, we may draw our consolation out of five things, Faith,—Hope,—the Indwelling of the Spirit,—Prayer,—and the Sacraments.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 56.<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 9.<sup>3</sup> Psalm ciii. 3.<sup>4</sup> Zech. x. 2.<sup>5</sup> Romans xv. 4.

## **Christian Consolations.**





ETC., ETC.,

## CHAPTER I.

THAT FAITH IS THE GROUND AND FOUNDATION OF A CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT: SEVERAL DOUBTS AND SCRUPLES ABOUT BELIEVING, ANSWERED.

FAITH is the root of all blessings. Believe, and you shall be saved: believe, and you must needs be sanctified: believe, and you cannot choose but be comforted: believe that God is true in all his promises, and you are the seed of faithful Abraham, and shall inherit the promises made to Abraham: believe that you are Christ's, and Christ is yours; and then you are sure that none can perish, whom the Father hath given to him. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."\* And as Martha said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;"† so let all that groan and pine away in sorrow, say, Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst appeared to my soul in thy goodness, I had not fainted in my trouble. Isaiah foretels,‡ that it should be Christ's office "to give the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." For St. John saw in the spirit, that they that followed Christ, are clothed "in white garments,"

\* Rom. viii. 1.

† John xi. 21.

‡ Isaiah lxi. 3.



in garments of joy, in the livery of gladness. Solomon, describing the provident mistress of a family,\* says, "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet." So the household of Christ are not afraid of frost and snow, nor of any bitter blast; they have put on the garment of dependence on Christ, which protects them, and do resolve never to put off their privy coat of confidence in their Saviour. With this did Christ encourage the poor woman, being under confusion, who had secretly touched the hem of his garment; "Be of comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole."† The first time that the word comfort is found in Scripture, is ‡ upon the birth of Noah; his father says, "This son shall comfort us:" so when God did give Christ to be made man, he did, as it were, say unto us, 'This Son shall comfort you, for his name is Jesus, and he shall save his people from their sins.' He that gave us him, hath given us all things with him. As it is true to say, that Matthew left all to follow Christ, so is it as true, that he got all that can be wished by following him.

It is the chemistry of faith (let me use that word) to turn all things into good and precious ore. It is Abraham's country in a strange land: Jacob's wages, when Laban defrauded him: Moses's honour, when he refused to be the son-in-law of Pharaoh's daughter: Rahab's security, when all Jericho besides did perish: David's rescue, when there was but a step between him and death: the power of the apostles, to be able to cast out devils: Mary Magdalen's sweet ointment, to take away the ill savour of her sins. Plead, therefore, with the oratory of faith, and say, 'Lord, I have no life but in thee, I have no joy but in thee, no salvation but in thee: but I have all these in thee; and how can my soul refuse to be comforted?'

\* Prov. xxxi. 21.    † Matt. ix. 22.    ‡ Gen. v. 29.

But some will say, perhaps, 'Faith is a powerful comforter: but I, poor wretch, had need to be comforted concerning my faith. I find the pulse of it weak, and sometimes it intermits, as if it beat not at all. Methinks I am not drawn near to Christ, or that I am so far off, that I cannot embrace him.' Some such infirmity may seem to have been in the Thessalonians; and therefore, St. Paul says, "I have sent Timotheus to establish you, and to comfort you, concerning your faith." \*

Now, to turn this water into wine, and the trembling of this objection into peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, conceive as if these questions were put to you: 'Do you often accuse yourself of a weak faith in secret unto God?' I like it for a good symptom; for an hypocrite doth not use to accuse himself.—'And do you bewail your want to the Lord, because you would have it better supplied?' That is a good sign too, for it is the same as to thirst for the living God. They that have not the gift of faith, do not miss it; but they that have it, though but in a little, do insatiably desire the increase of it.

But do you find that the more you put forward to come to Christ, the more you are put back by doubts and temptations? It is right the resemblance of him that was sick of the palsy; † fain he would have been brought to Christ, but could not come at him for the press. This press that stops you, are the snares of the world, vain imaginations, nay, perhaps humility, a broken heart, and a tender conscience: yet find out a way to come to your Saviour, though the throng be cumbersome. If there be no other way, untile the house, break down the roof to be brought unto him; call unto the Lord to dissolve this house of clay, that thy soul may see him clearly without all impediment. But at the worst of all, do you lie in a swoon, as it

\* 1 Thess. iii. 2.

† Mark ii. 4.

were? do you think there is no life, no motion in your faith? do you fear the light of grace is so eclipsed, that you have lost all communion with Christ? Remember, and be assured, that you could not miss Christ so much, unless Christ were in you. Because God loves you, he seems to leave you; and withdraws out of the way for a time, because he would be found; and makes you desire to seek him, that you may hold him the surer to you, when you enjoy him. A mother that hath conceived, may think, not long after, that she perceives some tokens of her conception; in a while, she doubts of it again, and wisheth some signs of better satisfaction: she hangs long under many assays of fear and persuasion: at last, she finds the babe spring in her womb, and is utterly confirmed. So it is with them in whom Christ is born anew; they have found the Lord—yet sometime, as it is in the Canticles, “He is behind the lattice,” that we miss him by a spiritual jealousy, and fall into many of these fits, as if he were quite departed. And in this state of trepidation we must be exercised, that we may know, that holy fear and a troubled spirit are heavenly qualities, that may consist with faith.

Yet I have more to ask. Do you look dejectedly upon your faith, because you apprehend it is not full of life in the root, nor laden with fruit in godly practice? Woe be to them that are not sensible of those infirmities. It is one of the best lessons in the New Testament, “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus;”<sup>\*</sup> but it is one of the hardest. God gives a measure of faith to all in the covenant, that call upon him; but we have this gift in earthen vessels, and taint it with the affections of our carnal mind. The best faith is weak and wavering, short-sighted, riseth and falls like a tune in music. Therefore, to

<sup>\*</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 1.

encourage a perplexed mind, hearken to Isaiah,\* "Say to them that are of a sorrowful heart, Be strong, fear not." For though it be but an infant faith, it is a true faith: as an infant is a true man in the essence of a man, though not a man in growth; perfect in the real being, though not in the degrees, wherein we must strive to grow up more and more. To prove the truth of it, believe all the word of God, and it can be no wider; and for the soundness of it, believe in Christ, and look for salvation in him alone; then it is as legitimate and true-born as is the faith of any saint that is far more noble. A dim or a blear eye, that looked upon the brazen serpent, did procure a remedy for a wound, as much as a clear and well-conditioned eye; and a little faith, casting its weak beams on Christ and his death, will go far. The quantity of a grain of mustard-seed hath warmth and virtue in it to spread abundantly. If faith on earth hath shaken off all frailty, and comprehended the joys of heaven, without casting its eye aside to the love of this world, I do not conceive how the body could subsist any longer here, but that the soul, in that ecstasy, would be dissolved, and fly away.

Lastly. As God sees such sins in you as you cannot see, so he sees such graces in you as you cannot perceive. The charitable, to whom Christ speaks when they are at his right hand,† do deny such good things to be in them, as Christ did profess they had. The Canaanitish woman found no better in herself than the vileness of a dog, that waited for crumbs under the table; but Christ commends her for her great faith. The centurion‡ saw nothing but unworthiness in his person: but Christ gave him the praise above all those, to whom he had preached in Israel. Confess then, and be not ashamed to say,

\* Chap. xxxv. 4. † Matt. xxv. 34.

‡ Matt. viii. 10.

"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" And take consolation, that water-springs shall flow out of a barren ground, which suspected itself to be parched and dry. Though you see but little by your own light, it is because it is put into the lantern of humility. And let these be the consolations of faith.





## CHAPTER II.

THAT A CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT FLOWS FROM THE GRACE OF HOPE. THE OBJECT OF HOPE IS, I. THAT WHICH IS GOOD. II. A GOOD ABSENT. III. THOUGH ABSENT, YET POSSIBLE; AND THAT FOR THREE REASONS. IV. THOUGH POSSIBLE, YET DIFFICULT. AN ACCOUNT OF TWO SORTS OF DIFFICULTIES, WITH PARTICULAR ENCOURAGEMENTS AGAINST THEM.

YET know that faith never rides single, but it carries hope before it. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for."\* No scripture doth better contain them both in a little than Titus:† the apostle says, that "the faith of God's elect," first, "acknowledgeth the truth;" secondly, that "it is according to godliness;" thirdly, "it is in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised, before the world began." When you see a weight of iron tied to a line, wound upon a wheel from the ground to the top of a house, —remember it is like the heart of a sinner, leaden and heavy, lying upon the ground, and wound up in this text, with the line of hope, to the top of heaven. Heaven then is the express and fair object of hope, and God, in his promise, is the procurer. "Promise," I say; for we do not grope for heaven blind-fold, and fall upon it out of our own head without a warrant: but our assurance is incomparably the best that can be given, and in the best manner; "a promise made before the world began;" that is, freely, unrequested, when we could have no being to ask

\* Heb. xi. 1.

† Chap. i. 1, 2.

it; and made over to Christ, the Mediator, that it should be put into his hand to perform it to us. And it is unchangeable, as is all the truth of God: for "he cannot lie," neither is there any shadow of change in him. What can we desire more? Carry this evidence along with you, and show it to yourself upon every disquietness and deep plunge of heart; and how can you choose but convince yourself that your melancholy and distrust is causeless? "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness."\* And "we rejoice in hope."† The design of hope is considered four ways: First, it intends unto that which is good;—which makes a difference between hope and fear; for we hope for that which is good, we fear that which is evil. Secondly, it is not that good which is present, but absent; and this makes a difference between hope and fruition. "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"‡ Thirdly, though it be a good absent, and not yet obtained, yet it is possible;—which is the difference between hope and despair: but we have no colour for despair, since all things are possible to God. Fourthly, it is a possible good, but 'bonum arduum,' to be gotten with difficulty and pains; which puts a difference between the diligence of hope and careless security. These are the four promontories of hope, and a good wind blows from every quarter.

I. First, it is good for a man to hope, since we hope for that which is good, so good that it exceeds all that eye hath seen: for as yet we see not God but in his creatures. Nor ear hath heard it, that is, in its full, unutterable excellency, which the words of holy Scripture cannot express to our imperfect reason. Then "neither can it enter into the heart

\* Prov. x. 26.

† Rom. xii. 12.

‡ Rom. viii. 24.

of man :” for things can seem no greater than words can utter. “ We know as yet but in part, hereafter we shall know as we are known.” If we have boasted to the heathen, that we look for a kingdom and a crown of glory, we are sure we shall not be ashamed of that hope.\* We may be ashamed that we have doted upon petty things, out of which we have devised felicity, and they have failed and deceived us : but our treasure laid up in the heaven is so sure, that in the end, and in the day of trial, none shall insult over our hope, and say, ‘ Where is now the Lord your God ?’ If a mortal man detain the wages of the labourer, it is a sin : therefore, it cannot be incident to God, “ who is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love.”† “ We shall not always be forgotten : our expectation shall not perish for ever.”‡ The judgment of a good eyesight is to see afar off ; so, in the judgment of a good hope, to remark the unspeakable reward of a better age to come. Whereupon it hath sufficient satisfaction and content to leave or to lose all it hath, things “ not worthy to be compared to the glory which is revealed in us.”§ The rich mines and golden trade of both the Indies are on the other side the line : so the rich trade of hope is in the other world. Change your poor freight which is your lading in this vessel of clay, and barter it for an immortal possession.

Hope that is not under the embers, but mounts up into a trembling flame, reckons not what it is worth by a very little which it hath in hand, but by its share which is reserved in the storehouse of God’s eternal recompense. Now I am abased ; but there is mine honour, a far more abundant exceeding weight of glory. Now I carry about a crazy, sickly body ; there it shall be immortal, and incident to no dis-

\* Rom. v. 5. † Heb. vi. 10. ‡ Psalm ix. 18. § Rom. viii. 18.



temper. Now my neighbours and acquaintance despise me, and run far from me; there I shall be enrolled with angels and saints, and "with the church of the first-born, and with the spirits of just men made perfect." \* Now I live in all disorder of church ordinances, in distraction of schisms, in the filthy stench of old and new heresies; but there is the New Jerusalem, where all things set forth the glory of the Lamb, in beauty, and holiness, and truth. Now I must die, and deliver up my body unto the dust; but Christ died and rose again the third day, and will bring again with him, in due time, all those that sleep: and "comfort one another with these words," saith St. Paul.† And as when Christ ascended into heaven, "he went up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet;"‡ so let every heart break out into praise and gladness, whose hope flies up unto the Lord in his holy places: "holding fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end."§

II. Stay yet, and consider it is a good which is absent, that we hope for: ~~when~~ it is come, and brought to ~~pass~~, hope is at the journey's end. "Say to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings."|| It shall be well; 'dixit,—erit.' It is not paid down, as we say, in ready money, but we have a good bond for assurance.

Let one object upon this, 'Doth not hope deferred afflict the soul?' Yet be not disheartened; it is better than so. For first, we have somewhat in hand; because that which faith lays hold of, is really and actually its own: now hope is faith's rent-gatherer, and takes up that which faith claims upon the bargain, which Christ hath made for us.

To be clearer yet: "We are sealed with the Holy

\* Heb. xii. 23.

† 1 Thess. iv. 14.

‡ Psalm xlvi. 5.

§ Heb. iii. 6.

|| Isaiah iii. 10.

Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.”\* You see then, that though we have not the inheritance as yet, we have the earnest of it; and an earnest penny is more than nothing. Here I must distinguish between a pledge and an earnest. A pledge is laid down for assurance to repay that which was lent; but an earnest is given upon a bargain, to keep that till the rest be brought in. Now the earnest we receive of the kingdom to come, is the seal of the Spirit, an imprinted comfort that it shall be ours, a seal that cannot be defaced, a comfort that cannot be taken from us. So much as you have of that seal, so much you have of the earnest: therefore, you cannot say that hope hath quite nothing to stay its longing. The blossoms of the spring do not only promise, but are God’s earnest, to represent the fruits which will wax ripe in autumn.

I will make it out in another similitude. He that is in a merchant’s warehouse, where spices are stored up, shall have some taste of them in his palate by their strong scent, though he put not one corn into his mouth: so we taste heaven, because the Spirit that comes from heaven, dwells in us, and gives many delightful signs of a glorified reversion.

But to go forward: it may not be denied but that hope is anxious and restless, till it come to enjoy. How tedious a thing it is to stay long without the company of them whom we entirely love! and can it be otherwise than irksome, to be so long absent from the vision of God, and of Christ compassed with innumerable angels? St. Paul says no less:† “We that have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.” Here are groans and sighs indeed; but we shall never be sea-sick with that easy tossing, having “hope as an anchor of our souls.”‡

\* Eph. i. 13, 14.

† Rom. viii. 23.

‡ Heb. vi. 19.

Hope of the right stamp, looking for the appearance of God, and the reward that he brings with him, hath a good mate that goes together with it, and that is patience. In the saddest book of the Scripture,\* it is written, "It is good that a man should hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Which, that it may not be wanting, we must contend for it in prayer, as it is† "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ." And it is no difficult thing to be persuaded. For when we are held off for a while from the inheritance of heaven, do we not attend God's leisure? And will the handmaid wait for her mistress, being in some degrees of place above her? And shall not the creature stay the leisure of the Creator, so infinite above us! Beside, the expectation of the recompense will increase the recompense, and make it more superlative; therefore, "let not him that believes make haste."‡ Nay, so your spirit will be patient, the Lord will allow you your importunity to call upon him to hasten: "My strength, haste thee to help me."§ Finally, stay for that contentedly, which, when it comes, it comes but once, and shall abide for ever.

III. Another degree upon which hope steps higher, is this, that her aim is possible. I have said how that which is proposed to it, is good; that it is not disconsolate, though it be in futuration, and not yet obtained (for it is too good to be yet obtained;) if patience have its perfect work, it can attend cheerfully. "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him."|| Strike we therefore pleasantly upon this third string, that the past object of divine hope is to be accomplished. "For I run not as uncertainly, I fight not as one that beateth the air."¶

\* Lam. iii. 26.

† 2 Thess. iii. 5.

‡ Isaiah xxviii. 16.

§ Psalm xxii. 19.

|| Psalm lxii. 5.

¶ 1 Cor. ix. 26.

Paul did do all things, and suffer all things, for that which is feasible, and might be achieved.

The covetous is a projector for so much wealth as can never be gotten. The epicure longs for so much pleasure as can never be enjoyed. Great clerks and philosophers seek for so much knowledge as can never be found; which, in Isaiah's words, is "to spend money for that which is not bread, and to labour for that which doth not satisfy."\* This is able to break the brain and to break the heart; for there is no labour like to lost labour. "But the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life."† His hope stands upon a sound bottom; it is all comfort, for three reasons: 1. It is possible, because it comes from an infinite power; 2. Because it is derived from infinite love and goodness; 3. It hath abundant satisfaction from long and constant experience; and what can we desire more?

1. The first pillar that props it up, is the almightiness of God. "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee," says our Saviour.‡ Talk not to me how the seas should be turned into dry land; or how the poor can be raised up to be set with the princes of the people; or how palsies and fevers can be cured with a word. I will stop all gaps of infidelity with this one bush, "That God is able to do it." He that is made by no cause, cannot be confined in his being; and he that hath no bounds in his being, can have no bounds and restriction in his power. And if any fancy start out of our weak brain, to cavil that somewhat is impossible to God,—it is soberly spoken by one, that 'it were better to say that this could not be done, than that God could not do it.' There is no possibility, therefore, for christian hope to despair, because all things are possible to God. There is no horizon under heaven, or above heaven, that hope

\* Chap. lv. 2.

† Prov. xi. 30.

‡ Mark xiv. 16.

cannot look beyond it. For that comfort that is commensurable with the strength and power of God, is as large as can be contained in the heart of a creature.

But if you lean upon the help of men, and hosts, and angels, they are slender reeds, and will give you a fall: as God said of the vain trust of the Jews, "They shall be ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation."\* How many do I see to sink under a little sorrow, because they have too much temporal comfort! The world is too liberal to them; it hath given them of all things so largely, that they have not the patience to want any thing: as God told Gideon, that he had too much of man in his army to depend upon the Almighty for victory, and he bade him retain but the thirtieth part, and his foes should flee before him.† Throw all the miserable comforts of the world out of doors for rubbish, and cast yourself upon the strength of God, and upon that alone; and then say, 'Lord, receive me, for I have driven all other solace from me, that I might enjoy thee alone: now I am ready for my Saviour, for there is none to help me but only thou, O Lord!'

2. That which holy hope hath in its prospect, is possible, not only for the infiniteness of power, but for the infiniteness of the mercy of our God. It is easy to get the favour of a gracious and a gentle nature among the sons and daughters of men: and the most generous are the most reconcilable. Then what possibility, nay, what readiness will hope find to be reconciled to God, "merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth?"‡ The devil is not more frequent nor more strong in any temptation, than to undermine hope in this point, that it is too forward and too peremptory to expect remission of sins: fain he would have a tender conscience stick in this mire, and never get out of it. Some reverend

\* Isaiah xx. 5. † Judges vii. 4. ‡ Exod. xxxiv. 6.

writers go so far as to teach that Satan himself at first, when he began his mischief in Paradise, was of opinion, that sin could not be forgiven, it being his own case; and he would never have tempted Eve to disobedience, if he had imagined the eating of the forbidden fruit could be pardoned; not suspecting that God would have given his only Son to die for our redemption. Which I pass by, because it depends upon a grave question, whether God could pardon sin by his absolute power, without satisfaction made to his justice? Deep disputings will yield but shallow comforts. Of this we are assured, that the means which the Father appointed, are excellent, into which "the angels desire to look,"\*—to give us "redemption and forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of his grace."† "We have trespassed against our God, but there is hope concerning this thing."‡ "Forgiveness of sins" is put into our creed: he that doth not believe it, hath no creed nor Christianity in him. Do you believe 'a catholic church?' that is the dowry of that church, which Christ espoused to him in his blood. Do you believe 'a communion of saints?' this is it in which we are baptized, in which all our communion doth join, "That through Christ is preached forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe, are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses."§ So also it is put into our prayer, as well as into our creed. And he that taught us to pray, "Forgive us our sins," hath taught us this comfort, that sins are pardonable.

Yet an afflicted conscience will receive suggestion, that some sins indeed are pardonable, but not all, not the sin of the evil angels, not the sin against the Holy Ghost: "and there is a sin unto death: I do not say

\* 1 Pet. i. 12.

† Ezra x. 2.

‡ Eph. i. 7.

§ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

ye should pray for it," says St. John.\* These, verily, are set out for instances of irreversible judgment, to deter us from committing crimes of a vast magnitude. But mark, the holy Scriptures have not unfolded it clearly and explicitly, wherein the heinousness of these sins did consist, that we may not accuse ourselves of them, and fall into despair, as if we had committed them. Since you know not expressly what these are, how can you lay them to your own charge? Nay, if you lay them to your own charge, you must be mistaken; for he that condemns himself, shall not be condemned of the Lord. Such incurable castaways as have their consciences seared, are not sensible of their guilt. Who more like to be of that number than the Pharisees, who justified themselves, saying, 'Are we also blind?'

'Well,' says a forlorn sinner, 'my sins, then, are not the forenamed, nor out of possibility of mercy; but it is almost as bad that they are in an unlikelihood to mercy, for they are very heinous.' As unto that confession that your trespasses are very heinous, conceive so of them, and spare not: true repentance thinks no sin to be a little one. So St. Jerome spake to the commendation of the lady Paula, in her funeral sermon, that she was wont to bewail every fault she had committed, as if it were one of the most presumptuous crimes. But be it so really, that God hath let you incur no small delinquencies: as Aaron was not free from idolatry—nor David from adultery—nor Peter from abjuration of Christ—nor Paul from persecuting the church—nor Manasses from witchcraft—nor Mary Magdalen from indefinite scandal; well, I know not what; who yet all obtained mercy, for a pattern to them who hereafter should believe in Christ to everlasting life.† They were

\* 1 Epist. v. 16.

† 1 Tim. i. 18.

called Novatians, who blotted out the beginning of the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel, because the story tells us, that Christ dismissed the woman taken in adultery with a gracious gentleness. Why should not his procedure in judgment be like his doctrine? Did he not preach that publicans and harlots should go into heaven before proud justiciaries? "Be merciful unto my sin, for it is great," says David.\* This is not the way to deal with mortal judges, when we stand at their bar; but this is the way to obtain propitiation from our God; 'heal me, for I am sore wounded; cure me, for I am very sick; be merciful to my sin, for it is very great.' Zozimus, a pagan, that envied the honour of Constantine the Great, makes this tale to discredit him in his history; that Constantine had put his wife Fausta, and his son Crispus, to death; after which, being haunted with an ill conscience, that gave him no quiet, he sought among the heathen priests for expiation, and they could give him no peace; but he was told that the religion of Christians was so audacious as to promise pardon to all sins, were they never so horrible. Is not this to commend the emperor and his religion under the form of a dispraise? for what rest could a troubled mind attain to, from the rites and superstitions of idol gods? But, in the immense value of the price of the blood of Christ, there is redemption for every sinner that repents and believes. "Whatsoever ye loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," says Christ to his apostles.† Oh, lose not a syllable of such comfort in this uncomfortable world! 'Quodcunque' is 'all manner of sin,' great and little. And if Christ hath given such commission to men on earth, to unloose every sin by the power of their office, and the word of consolation,—then how unbounded

\* Psalm xxv. 11.

† Matt. xviii. 18.



is his own clemency! No sins' can superabound his grace, if we do not sin presumptuously, because grace abounds.

Yet the poor publican will beat his breast, and cry out dolefully, 'My sins are many; they are more in number than the hairs of my head.' The bill of indictment is a true bill: who can tell how oft he offendeth? Scarce any sin we act, but hath a nest of sins in it; then think we what a heap will they make, when they are put all together? Peter, it seems, misdoubted, that if a man were forgiven, that had trespassed often, it would be scandalous, and encourage the offender; therefore he thought it fit to stint indulgence to some mediocrity, as it is,\* "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?—until seven times? Jesus answereth, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven times." So that Christ commends a boundless forgiveness in a finite number for an infinite. And doubtless, himself would not stick with us for the same number. God forbid we should think he taught to be more merciful, or of greater perfection than himself. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven."†

Be thankful, and admire the mercies of our Father, both for nailing our great sins to the cross of Christ, and for acquitting us from the innumerable fry of minim sins, those of daily incursion; because when one of the least is remitted, all are remitted together. Mark that considerably. One that committed some foul and leprous sin, goes mourning upon the deep sense of it, and especially the horror of it makes him fear damnation; yet he greatly deceives himself if he think his other sins are passed over, and this great one, or a few such, do remain to his perdition. For

\* Matt. xviii. 21.

† Luke vii. 47.

do you hope comfortably that some faults of omission, some idle words, some garish and customary fashion of pride, are remitted to you? With the same affiance, leaning on Christ, you may hope that you are discharged from your greatest enormities. For all unrighteousness is covered at once to them, with whom God is well pleased. No sin is forgiven to him that is not in Christ,—and against him that is in Christ, there is no condemnation. They are the sons of God, to whom the Lord doth graciously remit any fault; but where any fault is not remitted, they are his enemies. He that is justified from any sin, must be truly penitent; but a true penitent is sorry for all sins together, hates them, eschews them all alike. Then follows a plenary absolution from all iniquity, through Christ our Lord.

And beware that you overlook not these multitudes of sins of the under size, as if little grief or anxiety would serve for them. Are they not numberless corns of sand? And may not a weight of too much sand sink a ship as soon as a burden of too much iron? The dailiness of sin must be bewailed with the dailiness of sorrow. And then, “when thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.”\* Now, tell me, if this balm be not enough to heal the bleedings and bruising of despair? Talents of sins, and sins in small money, you may hide them all in the wounds of Christ. It is possible for God to do the benefit, and possible for thee to receive it. “Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”†

3. It must now be added, how that which hope waits for, is possible, since it may find satisfaction

\* Prov. iii. 24.

† Psalm cxxx. 8.

from long and constant experience. In the younger days of the world, somewhat might be said to excuse the backwardness of hope: they wanted proof and demonstration in those times. Even Cain was the sooner overtaken with despair, crying out, "My sin is greater than can be forgiven me." He had not lived so long to be taught the contrary by experience. But every age hath given advantage to hope to be satisfied better and better. "O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them."\* The records of God do tell us how the armies of aliens have been discomfited before his children; how the rocks have given them drink, and the barren wilderness bread; how the church hath been scattered and re-collected; the righteous continually supported, either with deliverance or patience; that the dead have been raised up to life; nay, that Enoch and Elias were taken up alive into heaven, to implant into our minds, that both they that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of Christ, and come forth; and that such as shall be found living at that day, shall be caught up in the clouds, and be translated into heaven. And I challenge hope to instance, if it can surmise, that any thing is impossible to be brought to pass, since there is a precedent in every thing to demonstrate, that the right hand of the Lord hath brought mighty things to pass. There is one thing, I confess, for which there is no example, neither can be evidenced, till all things be accomplished, that is, the coming of the Lord Christ, with the new heavens and the new earth; and yet, to confirm us in that mystery to come, St. John did see the idea or glimpse of it in his revelation.

\* Psalm xlv. 1.

The use of all this is to remember the transactions of God in the times that are gone before. Who ever saw the righteous forsaken? or the wicked flourish long? Was there ever any persecution of the church which hath not ended in its triumph? But stay for it, and pray for it, and condole for the delays of God's providence, till you may say in earnest, "My soul fainteth for thy salvation." \* How easy is it for a Christian that hath any nostril, to run after God in the odour of his sweet ointments, and trace his steps from point to point? and then to say with David, "I have remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself." † And from another prophet, ‡ "Ye shall see their way, and their doings, and ye shall be comforted concerning all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem."

The great storehouse of consolation is hope: therefore all this, and more, must be said to keep it fresh, like a green olive tree, having never a sear or withered bough upon it. I come now to complete it; I have shown it aims only at good, and that which is only and excellently good: at such a good whose harvest is not brought in all in a year, but still there is more and more to be had, and the most to come. It is possible, through the greatness of God's power and mercy, as all ages have witnessed.

IV. But lastly; that which may seem to pinch is, that it is 'bonum arduum,' 'a good not easily attained,' but with great labour and diligence, to give warning against sloth and security. It were not worth our longing, to say we hope for petty things, easy, and at hand; but for things of value, for which we must struggle with many lets and impediments to possess them. No man need to hope to find cockle shells on the shore; but to find pearls in the sea, that is an object for the adventure of a jeweller. Neither is the

\* Psalm cxix. 31. † Psalm cxix. 52. ‡ Ezek. xiv. 22.

jewel of christian hope easily purchased. But as Elijah said to Elisha, "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me, when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee."\* Much after that sort I commune with my heart, and say, "It is good to seek for eternal life, pursue it, as the hart brayeth after the rivers of waters: there will be much ado to get it, for 'many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' † Nevertheless, if thou canst see the Lord, as if he were continually before thee, thou shalt not miss of that thou desirest: for all things are possible to him whose eyes are ever toward the Lord."

These difficulties upon which I strike, are either in ourselves, or in our adventure: in ourselves, partly through natural imbecility, partly through contracted impotency.

1. Our natural languor is that of original contagion, which makes us so weak, that there is none that doeth good, no, not one: which is not to be extenuated, as if the malignity of it might be suppressed with a little resistance. It is good to know the power of so strong an enemy, that we may be fortified against it. It is a root of bitterness never to be digged up out of corrupt nature: a coal of fire spitting out sparks of temptations continually: as inward to us as the marrow is in our bones. Yet there is hope in Christ to slake this fire, though not utterly in this life to quench it. It is a body of death, a whole body, consisting of all the members of sin; yet a body is but flesh, and a spirit is mightier than flesh. Apply that of the prophet Zechariah to it, as we may read it by the direction of our margin, and keep to the original: ‡ "If it be difficult in the eyes of this people, shall it be difficult in mine eyes, saith the Lord?" Therefore, since God is our help against the insurrection of this rebellious sin, let us be comforted in his

\* 2 Kings ii. 10. † Luke xiii. 24. ‡ Chap. viii. 6.

help and not in excuses. For we must not plead our personal maladies and natural inclinations, and think that God will take it for an answer, and ask no more.

‘I am dull of understanding,’ says one, ‘and what I am taught I cannot bear it away. I am suddenly transported with indignation, and cannot choose but break out: I am retentive of an injury, and cannot easily be reconciled.’ All this, and the like, is no better than the answer of those ill-mannered guests in the Gospel, which were invited to a feast made by a king, — “We cannot come, I pray you have us excused:” which sounds like confession and humility, but it is denial and defiance. Spend your breath in a better way, and cry out often and affectionately, — “Give me not over to myself, O Lord; take away from me my stony heart, and give me a heart of flesh.” Drop down upon this barren earth, and it shall bring forth quite against the bias of nature. The high-minded will grow meek as a lamb, the covetous will begin to disperse and scatter abroad, the lying lips will confess the truth, bitter cruelty will melt into pity, new-fangled braveries will be laid aside, and blush at vanity. To what purpose are the pourings in of the Spirit, but that what is wickedly inbred from our conception, should be shaken off from the tree, and a better fruit spring up in the place, from the increase of God?

Mark the rain that falls from above, and the same shower that dropped out of one cloud, increaseth sundry plants in a garden, and severally according to the condition of every plant: in one stalk it makes a rose, in another, a violet, divers in a third, and sweet in all. So the Spirit works its multiformous effects in several complexions, and all according to the increase of God. Is thy habit and inclination choleric? Why, try thyself if thou be very apt to be zealous in a good cause, and it turns thy natural

infirmity into holy heat.—Is melancholy predominant? the grace of God will turn that sad humour into devotion, prayer, and mortifying thy pleasures to die unto the world.—Is thy temperature sanguine and cheerful? the goodness of God will allow it unto thee in thy civil life, in a good mean; but over and above it will make thee bountiful, easy to pardon injuries, glad of reconciliation, comfortable to the distressed, always rejoicing in the Lord.—Is a man phlegmatic and fearful? if this freezing disease, which is in thee from thy mother's womb, be not absolutely cured, yet the Holy Ghost will work upon it, to make thy conscience tender, wary to give no offence, to make thee pitiful, penitent, contrite, ready to weep for thy transgressions. "There are two handles to take hold of every thing," says a heathen: a dissolute man takes hold of original frailties, and makes them serpents: a holy man declines their serpentine nature, and catcheth them by that part, which may conduce to all manner of virtue. This is the comfort of hope against original iniquitation, that this great enemy, by the operation of the Spirit, shall be made our friend, or our footstool. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."\*

What is stronger than a lion? yet if the lion be killed, "out of the strong comes forth sweetness."† For all this, the worst is not past: beside natural pronity to sin, we have contracted much more evil by custom, education, strong habits, noxious examples, bad enticements and infusions. The cockatrice egg was laid, when we were in our mother's womb, but it proves more venomous being hatched, and grown able to fly abroad. There are seventy sons of Ahab, who shall kill thee? Even the sword of the Spirit: "there is none like it," as David said of that

\* Rom. vii. 24.

† Judges xiv. 14.

of Goliath.\* This is sufficient, not merely to cut down grass and briars, but to hew down the trees, to cut off the branches, to shake the leaves, to scatter the fruit, to frighten away the fowls from the branches, and the beasts from grazing under it; † or, as the apostle comforts us in plain words, without a parable, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." ‡ If you be over toiled and heated too much, you know how to cool: cast off some garments, wipe away the sweat, sit still and stir not, lest you inflame yourself with motion. Follow the same method, lay aside the burden of sin that inflames you, cast off the weight and the superfluity of naughtiness: bear in mind that Christ sweat drops of blood in his agony, to make you ashamed of toiling and sweating in Satan's drudgery. Take ease in a sabbath of holy rest, and moil not in the unprofitable works of darkness. Try what refrigeration this will give unto your conscience: else take heed that you be not put to a terrible sweat of fear, lest God take you away in his wrath, and give you up for ever unto Satan, whom you have served so willingly.

"To the law and to the testimony: mind no examples but when they are wrapt up therein." "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." § What a case had Noah been in, if he had framed his life by common practice, when all flesh had corrupted their way? Choose better company, as Enoch did to walk with God. || And "can two walk together unless they be agreed?" ¶ It is more than agreement: it imports endearment, benevolence, friendship with God. No title can be greater or sweeter: what can match that honour of Abraham and the apostles, to be called the "friends of God and Christ?" No league in the world more

\* 1 Sam. xxi. 9. † Dan. iv. 14. ‡ Phil. iv. 13.  
§ Rom. xii. 2. || Gen. v. 24. ¶ Amos iii. 3.



sought for or more willingly accepted : no amity less burdensome or more beneficial. St. Austin \* brings in a couple that served the Roman emperor, thus debating upon it: 'What can we look for in this palace, more than to be called the friends of our sovereign? When we have got this, it is no sure and unchangeable favour. And how long shall we attend before we be promoted to it? But let us then turn to God in this hour, and sue to be his friends, and it shall be done instantly, and remain eternally.'—"Ask, and it shall be given, seek, and ye shall find." And as we trespass by sins of daily prevention, there is a dailiness of mercy to comfort us. But as you love Christ, and would be beloved, struggle with temptations, do not yield upon the first enticement, no, nor upon the second or third assault. "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you:" quit yourself like a man, fight like a Christian: "the flesh is weak, but the Spirit is willing, ready, able to assist you." † Thus hope waxeth valiant, and assures itself of victory against customs, habits, and all contracted impotencies.

2. Lay now our adventure, the toil and peril of our labour, wherein we are employed, in another balance, and more difficulty will appear. For hope is wise and doth not flatter itself, as if the kingdom of heaven were accessible with little pains. What carefulness ought this to work in us? what self-denial? what fear? what zeal? what unblamable conversation? "I run, I fight, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." ‡ "For Christ Jesus I have suffered the loss of all things." § Christ having overcome the sharpness of death, hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers: yet to put us to our labour and skill, to follow, mark what he has taught us,—"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." ||

\* Confess. 8. c. 6.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

§ Phil. iii. 8.

† Matt. xxvi. 41.

|| Matt. vii. 14.

And, wherefore, is it so strait and narrow? a question worthy to be resolved, to teach us and to comfort us.

First; a very religious life is said, by a metaphor, to go in at a strait gate, because it is our master-piece to find the door, or to begin well; therefore, it is called "to be born again." For, as to be born into the world needs more art, and skilful midwifery, than to bring us up; so to be regenerate, to begin to live the life that is in Christ, is exceeding irksome to flesh and blood: so many are the enticements that throng about the way, to keep us from the door, and to hold us in love with those sins, which have been our companions. As an orator will be more timorous to deliver the first period of his speech, than all that follows; so we stick long at the first onset to reform to be strict, to pass away with so much vanity as must be forsaken. The penitent thief could not find the door, till he was going out of the world: St. Paul, as some compute, was twenty-eight years old before he left to be a blasphemer. But rush on, and make way through all resistances: he that hath one foot over the threshold, and hath cast the world behind him, is well advanced into the courts of our God.

Secondly; a heavenly mind gathers itself up into one wish, and no more. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require."\* Grant me thyself, O Lord, and I will ask no more. The new creature asks nothing of God, but to enjoy God: give me this, O Lord, and for the rest, let Ziba take all. I will part with all to buy that one pearl, the riches of heavenly grace. The servant of sin hath all manner of pleasures under heaven to trade in. Can he ask for a shop with more variety of ware? why may he not have these, you will say, and life eternal to boot? Some of them are inconsistent with life eternal; but

\* Psalm xxvii. 4.

all are not, so they be added, and not sought for : as our Saviour distinguisheth, " First, seek the kingdom of God, and these things shall be added."\* But if you seek them, which is to love them for themselves, and above the kingdom of God, it is like a man that carries a piece of timber at breadth upon his back ; there is no room for a man to get in with such an impediment upon his shoulders. It is not the gate that excludes him, but he thrusts himself out with his own improvidence.

Thirdly ; there are thousands of scandals, millions of errors, to be avoided, but truth and holiness are in the middle, in a little compass ; and happy is he that shuns extremes, and falls perpendicularly upon the golden mean. The commandments of God are but " ten words ;"† the inventions of men, and the forms of will-worship are innumerable. " Pray, fast, give alms ;" Christ comprehends much external duty under those three heads, but the traditions of men are more than can be put in a catalogue. " Call upon God in the time of trouble ;" that, and no more, is the pole-star of faith in prayer ; but what a compass doth monkishness take in, to drop beads in the invocation of angels and saints ! Profaneness neglects the honour of God : superstition falls into needless excesses about it : the true fear of God is in the centre, as far from the one extreme as from the other. As in an accurate song, you must keep minim time, or else you will put the whole choir out ; so look that you sing the new song of the Lord with trembling and accurate observation, miss neither cliff nor note, that is, neither sound doctrine, nor pious practice.

These are the reasons why it is so hard to get access to Christ in a narrow way, and through a strait gate. If these difficulties be not discerned by some, it is because they take up Christianity as it is in use

\* Matt. vi. 33.

† Deut. iv. 13.

amongst men, and as they are born to it. But they that came to it in their years of understanding, and were trained up in church discipline many years before they were baptized, and all that time were put to exact trial what they would prove, and were taught it over and over, how the laws of Christ were far stricter than any other laws in the world ;—these were pre-acquainted with the covenant which they must perform, and then received it, with the largest and hardest conditions. Yet they were brought on with two special comforts : first, that God did behold from heaven the mightiness of the task, which we took upon us, the troubles of persecutions, the dangers of temptations, the infirmities of man to resist them. “He knows whereof we are made, he remembereth we are but dust :” it puts him to admire the performances of his saints, as Jesus marvelled at the centurion’s faith.\* Secondly, when we are under our hazards, we shall have an answer from the Lord, as St. Paul had, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”† Therefore, as the Lord said of David, when he had chosen him, “I have laid help upon one that is mighty :”‡ so we, casting ourselves upon the help of God, upon one that is almighty, though of ourselves we have gathered little into our omer, the blessing of God upon it will not let us lack. “Every hard matter that rose among the people was brought to Moses.”§ So in every hard cause, desire the Lord to plead it, and to judge it; bring it to him, leave it in his court, and he will end it. These are the cordials to revive hope, touching the difficulties it finds, in the way to obtain that good which is set before it.

\* Matt. viii. 10.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

‡ Psalm lxxxix. 19.

§ Exod. xviii. 16.



### CHAPTER III.

HOW A CHRISTIAN'S COMFORTS FLOW FROM THE INHABITATION  
AND TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY GHOST; AS ALSO FROM THE  
SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT UNTO ALL OBEDIENCE, AND  
THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I HAVE insisted with so much length and variety upon Hope, because it is the largest inlet of Christian consolation. Yet, in the third place, that which carries it on, nay, that which causeth it, is the Holy Ghost. As the air is the medium through which the eye doth see all things, yet it is the light that shines in it that makes all things visible: so hope is the principal means, enlivened by faith, through which we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; yet it is the Spirit inhabiting, that kindles it, that enlightens it, which makes it affect its object, and cleave unto it. Our Saviour left the world, and ascended into heaven, for many reasons; one was, 'to give gifts unto men,' which gifts, though very many, are all united in their fountain, the Holy Ghost. Of which legacy, Christ gave warning before his death. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. The world knows him not, because it sees him not: but ye know him, for he shall dwell with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you."\* "If I go not

\* John xiv. 16—18.

away, the Comforter will not come unto you : but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”\* This Comforter, the everlasting Spirit, to speak after the phrase of men, is the proxy of Christ, his representative in our hearts. And so it was fulfilled : for when the Spirit descended in great abundance upon the church, St. Peter says, “ This is that which is come to pass.” “ Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.”† And for the evidence of it, it is said, “ The churches were edified, walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.”‡ Which text begets this note, that Christian solace consists in two things, which we may call the root and the fruit. The root is the Holy Ghost taking up his tabernacle in us, so that “ our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in us.”§ To walk by it in the fear of God is the fruit of sanctification in all manner of obedience.

1. Unto the former, the in-dwelling of the Spirit, let this be premised. When we speak of any one dwelling in safety, the great question is, Who keeps the house ? When David fled from Jerusalem for fear of Absalom, there was no likelihood that his palace would hold out, for “ he left ten women, that were concubines, to keep the house.”|| So if we leave our concubines, our lusts and carnal desires, to keep our conscience, they will betray us to Satan to get the possession. “ But who can take the city, if the Lord keep it ?”¶ How impregnable are we, if he dwell in us, and we in him, “ because he hath given us of his Spirit.”\*\*

All that one can say unto this, who is doubtful in faith, will be, ‘ Show me that the Father of mercies

\* John xvi. 7.  
§ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

† Acts ii. 16 & 28.  
|| 2 Sam. xv. 16.  
\*\* 1 John iv. 13.

‡ Acts ix. 31.  
¶ Psalm cxxvii. 1.

and the God of all comfort is entered into me, and it sufficeth.' I answer, I cannot show, that is, demonstrate it to another, that this eternal life is in him; but I can persuade an apt scholar to stir up the grace which is in him, that he may show it to himself. I say, he may do it, if he give his mind to it. Else, St. Paul made a question to no purpose, "Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"\*

I deny not but the devil hath a way to fetch it about, to make you misknow, and take no heed of that you do perceive, if he did not stagger you with delusions. This is the first lesson that he reads out of his morals, 'That distrust is a high point of wisdom; and be not over-reached with opinion: you are sure of that you see, and of no more.' But to meet with this fallacy: Is nothing certain, or at least so certain as that which may be seen? Why, the wind will blow away this objection, the air will confute it. What can you make up so close, that the air and the wind will not get into it? Yet you see it not, you know not whence it comes, it is an invisible messenger: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."† Breath is an imperceptible expiration; therefore, Christ breathed on his apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."‡ Some gales of western winds, in the spring, make the earth glad with their gentle blast, and open the buds and flowers: so there is a breath of omnipotent virtue, which fans the heart that was hot in sin, with its coolness; which carries away the caterpillars that eat up the tender leaf of our first greenness; which widens our blossoms, to make their expectation show itself openly; which perfumes the evil scents of scandals that annoy us, as it is express to that intent in

\* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

† John iii. 8.

‡ John xx. 22.

the mystical song, "Awake, thou north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."\*

I bring the case again to be examined: is no witness so competent to depose for truth, unless it be sensible, and chiefly discerned by the eye? then what ail all sects of philosophers to say, 'That the sun, and all the stars above, work upon these bodies below by heat and light, and likewise by influence?' An invisible virtue, that doth enter into the production of many effects; which seems to have God's approbation with his own voice, who mentions there "the sweet influences of Pleiades, and the bands of Orion."† And can the constellations of the firmament drop down good upon minerals and plants, upon man and beast, and by a secret derivation? What an error, or rather what a madness is it, then, to scruple whether he that made the heavens, can dart celestial beams into man's soul, without a sensible perception! And this is all I will say more unto it: Is not the soul of man above a material apprehension? Pliny, or Galen, or whosoever unadvisedly deny the immortality of it, will yield there is a soul in our composition, that holds all the parts of the body together, and moves, and acts in them; yet, they can as soon take a pencil, and paint an echo, as describe the intelligible nature of a soul, by species drawn out in our sensitive fancy. Therefore it concerns us, in maintenance of the dignity of our own nature, to say, that the Spirit of God can inform our soul, as well as our soul can inform our body. I know not what temptation may rise to gainsay the truth, that the soul is known by her powers and operations, that it justifies itself to be an immaterial substance, a spark kindled in us by God, from reason,

\* Cant. iv. 16.

† Job xxxviii. 31.



and will, and memory. But what evidence is there that there is a divine cause that worketh in, and is more than, these natural faculties? It is requisite to work close unto this question: and I answer, first, because the bounds of nature are known, beyond which, nature cannot reach forth itself: as it works in its own sphere to preserve itself in being, and in well-being, in health, in wealth, in fame and glory, in extending ourselves unto ages to come, by leaving a posterity, in preserving our country where we are born, and the like. But to have our conversation in heaven, at this present in heaven, to ascend thither in our desires, and in the tendencies of all our actions, to aspire to live in blessedness for ever, to long to be at that rest, where there is no sin; to look for a church which hath neither spot nor wrinkle: this could not enter into us to prosecute it all industriously, constantly, cheerfully, but by a supernatural elevation far above the vigour of a soul pressed down by a corruptible body, that is, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly: I feel the pulse of that divine Spirit beating in me by "delighting in tribulations" for Christ's sake, and "taking pleasure in infirmities" upon the same score.\* And again, "I am filled with consolation, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations."† An obstinate Pagan might arm himself with patience and resolution, to vex his persecutors, and rather fall into them, than decline them, out of spite and contumacy. But self-love being spun out of our bowels, bred in the bone; who could rejoice to endure anguish upon anguish, that God might be glorified, but by strength which we are not born unto, but which is given us, because we are born ~~again~~ of the Spirit?

\* 2 Cor. xii. 10.

† 2 Cor. vii. 4.

Go farther yet. How much is the content of a natural man laid aside, when a good Christian in his deliberate thoughts sometimes prays to have the rebellions of his heart kept under by some expedient cross? wisheth for wholesome correction to beat down the rankness of his sins? expects God's fan to winnow the chaff from the wheat. For he knows that as too much light dazzles the eyes, so too much prosperity surfeits the mind. Therefore, a good practitioner in repentance perceives there is no better way to bring him in from his wanderings, than to be scourged home with the gentle hand of God. To which, some expositors say, the spouse alludes (reading one word as it is right in our margin,) "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have puffed me up."\* If we be puffed up, it is time to pray that the eye of God's outward mercy be for a little turned from us. But where had nature learnt that lesson, if the Holy Ghost had never taught it?

Thirdly: As the Apostle says, "No man hates his own flesh." Every man, not overcome with a phrenzy of melancholy, loves his own being, and would preserve his life. The devil, that cannot die, knows how loth we are to die: "All that a man hath, will he give for his life."† But how many saints have undergone, how many more are willing to undergo the fiery trial, and offer up their bodies for the testimony of the Lord Jesus? not to be cried up in popularity: not to be enrolled in the fame of history, as there was such a sprinkling among the heathen. But they have died like lambs in the midst of wolves, when they have been hated, and evil spoken of in excess, because they would die for the truth of the Gospel, which their persecutors accounted to be blasphemy against the gods which they wor-

\* Cant. vi. 5.

† Job ii. 4.

shipped. If parents, or wives, or children, hung upon their arms, and besought them to spare themselves, they threw them off as Christ did Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me."\* To see a martyr at the point of death feel no horror in his fleshly nature, but to be raised up as high as the third heavens with zeal; what human power could bring him to it? nothing but the Holy Ghost did, as I may say, lure his soul out of the body, with the bait of a crown of glory.

Fourthly: "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, goodness, faith, temperance,"† &c. Is not the tree known by the fruit? Such a cluster hanging all together, growing constantly, and being fair and sound, it is not possible they should grow like a bulrush out of the mud of corrupt nature. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,"‡ that is, say it effectually, and from true allegiance to serve him as a Lord; for else Christ will say, "Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"§ This is the Spirit that acts not only in prophecies and miraculous gifts, but in every child of God. Even in the Old Testament, "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them:"|| 'them,' that is, those that were led out of Egypt by Moses, and hearkened to him. And much more in the state of the New Testament; "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."¶

This might be extended into a great length, that the Holy Ghost is the Comforter, called so by appropriation, though it belong to every person of the Holy Trinity, and is well expressed in the first Divine Song, which is printed before the Psalms of David in metre:

\* Matt. xvi. 23.

§ Luke vi. 46.

† Gal. v. 22.

|| Nehem. ix. 20.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

¶ Rom. v. 5.

“Thou art the very Comforter  
In all woe and distress;  
The heavenly gift of God most high,  
Which no tongue can express.”

This is “the unction, which we have from the Holy One;”<sup>1</sup> “the anointing which we have received of him that abideth in you :”<sup>2</sup> anointing oil is an oil to cure the sick;<sup>3</sup> “an oil of gladness;”<sup>4</sup> a fomentation to mitigate aches and torments in the bones, and in the heart.

2. And can the fruits choose but be answerable to the root? they must needs partake of it. First, because all that we do to the honour of God, must be done with gladness, willingly, and cheerfully: else it comes not from the spirit of sons, but either from the spirit of bondage, or rather from the spirit of the world. The new disciples received the word gladly, and were baptized.<sup>5</sup> They continued with one accord daily in the temple, “with gladness, and simplicity of heart.”<sup>6</sup> “I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of our Lord.”<sup>7</sup> “Sing psalms, make a joyful noise unto God.”<sup>8</sup> “Let us come with assurance in our supplications that we shall be heard, praying with faith in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>9</sup> “And then the prayer of the upright shall be God’s delight;”<sup>10</sup> and why God’s delight, but because his servants delight in prayer. “He that sheweth mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness.”<sup>11</sup> And he that giveth, offereth a blemished sacrifice, if he do it grudgingly: “For God loveth a cheerful giver.”<sup>12</sup> Not so much but our losses and tribulations must be sustained with gladness. “Thy rod and thy staff do comfort me.”<sup>13</sup> Enter into the

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 20.<sup>4</sup> Psalm xlv. 7.<sup>7</sup> Psalm cxxii. 1.<sup>10</sup> Prov. xv. 8.<sup>2</sup> Verse 27.<sup>5</sup> Acts ii. 41.<sup>8</sup> Psalm lxvi. 1.<sup>11</sup> Rom. xii. 8.<sup>13</sup> Psalm xxiii. 4.<sup>3</sup> James v. 14.<sup>6</sup> Verse 46.<sup>9</sup> Jude, ver. 20.<sup>12</sup> 2 Cor. ix. 7.

combat willingly, and the continuance will be a pleasure. Our consolation aboundeth by Christ: for "as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."<sup>1</sup> Therefore the Apostles did change the name of a famous disciple, called Joses, into a notion of this theme, and called him Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, "The son of consolation."<sup>2</sup> The rabbies of the Jews hold themselves very close to this doctrine, and would have it observed, that 'the merrier the heart is in the Lord, the more capable it is of the Spirit of God:' partly, because Miriam, when she prophesied of the mighty acts of Jehovah, took a timbrel in her hand, and danced:<sup>3</sup> partly, because that Samuel, after he had anointed Saul to be king over Israel, told Saul, "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp; and they shall prophesy, and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."<sup>4</sup> More emphatically, when Jehoshaphat called for Elisha to inquire of the Lord; says Elisha, "Bring me a minstrel: and it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him;"<sup>5</sup> that by the ravishing strains of music, his mind might be exalted into heavenly contemplations. Which is a great check to that drowsy dulness in devotion, which our late reformers have brought in, and have excluded the solemn melody of the organ, and the raptures of warbling and sweet voices, out of cathedral choirs. They that miss that harmony, can best tell, how it was wont to raise up their spirit, and, as it were, to carry it out of them to the choir in heaven. And beside, cheerfulness is not only an adjunct, or companion with all the works of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. i. 7.<sup>2</sup> Acts iv. 36.<sup>3</sup> Exod. xv. 20.<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5, 6.<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings iii. 15.

grace, in that time they are bringing forth ; but, being done and finished, that which is "post-nate," the after-birth, as I may call it, comes with such a gleam, gliding over all the soul, with such serenity and peace of mind as cannot be expressed ; our conscience bearing us witness that we have been conversant in doing the pleasure of the Lord, as it is, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world."<sup>1</sup>

Here I shall find work to heal the broken in heart, who look upon the fruits of their lives with no content in themselves, but are unsolaced, and cast down, because neither in number, nor in weight, have they brought in that which the Lord required : they look on their ways, and they find them crooked : they look on their heart, and they find it is not constant to good purposes. To whom I rejoin ; if this proceed from penitence, from quick sense of sin, from humility, which is opposite to a self-justifying, they have cause to praise God, that they are thus affected. Let them look narrowly if this gold (for it may prove no worse) be current, when it is brought to the touchstone ; then they may lift up their eyes, and look cheerfully towards Christ ; for it is no flattery to say, they are under his grace and mercy. Deal clearly, that you are astonished at your frailties, because you think that you can never work enough, never shun sin enough ; and though your conscience condemn you, God will afford you equity against the rigour of conscience : for "he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the spirit."<sup>2</sup> We are conceived in sin, and it is so intimate unto us, that we have no promise to be so spiritualized in this life, that we shall not often trespass. "God hath concluded all in sin, all in unbe-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. i. 12.      <sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 27.

lief, that he might have mercy upon all."<sup>1</sup> But it is one thing to fall into sin, another thing to run into it. One thing to be carried away by the passions of it, another to covet, and desire it. One thing to be overtaken in a fault, another thing to abide in it without repentance. And great odds between those that are given over to please themselves in filthiness, and between them that labour and desire to please God, though many times they attain not to perfect that willingness. The scope of the seventh chapter to the Romans, as I apprehend the mind of the apostle, is, to refresh our guilty consciences, that a regenerate man is not obnoxious to condemnation, though his flesh, upon some temptations, make him the servant of sin, because still in his mind he serves the law of God. And I am confirmed in that sense, because without all contradiction he teacheth the like doctrine: "The flesh and the spirit are contrary one to another, so that we cannot do the thing that we would."<sup>2</sup>

And will the righteous God require more of a sick and feeble servant, than his best endeavour? Will not Christ accept from us the same that he did from Mary, that broke the box of ointment over his head? "She hath done what she could."<sup>3</sup> Let a contrite heart, that would fain be righteous, remember the prayer of Nehemiah; "Let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name:"<sup>4</sup> or the protestation of St. Paul; "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things, willing to live honestly."<sup>5</sup> But this desire and willingness must be without hypocrisy; not like iron that is gilded, base metal within, and rich without; it must be steady, industrious, instant to perform. Vehement holy desire is a great degree to perfection in our

om. xi. 32.      <sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 17.      <sup>3</sup> Mark xiv. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Nehem. i. 11.      <sup>5</sup> Heb. xiii. 18.

state ; " For the beginning of wisdom is the desire of discipline,"<sup>1</sup> but a lazy careless desire is a great token of imperfection. " The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing ; " <sup>2</sup> and again, " the desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour ; " <sup>3</sup> like vagabonds, that when an officer catcheth them, will feign that they desire a service, and to be set at work ; but, take them at their word, and they will run away, that they may live in loitering, and upon other men's labours. St. Paul, provoking both rich and poor to liberality, according to their respective abilities, frames a rule upon that occasion, which is applicable to all good works. " If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not." <sup>4</sup> Yea, in some cases, when I desire a good thing, I am at my furthest. I desire the appearance of the Lord Jesus at the great day ! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. I can do no more. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. I must do no more ; for I must not attempt my own dissolution. I wish for the conversion of the Jews to the faith ; I must not compel them. This holds in a few things. In the most, willingness must show some practice ; as in the same chapter : " Now, therefore, perform the doing of it : that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also of that which you have." <sup>5</sup> But to desire to do, and to do little, is a sign that there was little desire. This hath overthrown many, that they desire not to reach high. But we know that God gives his grace by talents, and not in petty sums ; yet a lukewarm professor can be content with mites. Could such a one get a moderate competency of righteousness, knowing that

<sup>1</sup> Wisd. vi. 17.    <sup>2</sup> Prov. xiii. 4.    <sup>3</sup> Prov. xxi. 25.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Verse 11.



“without holiness no man shall see God,” then he would sit down, and let others strive, if they like it, to be the tallest cedars in the house of the Lord.

There are many such indifferent disciples, that would be always babes, and never come to a manly growth; wrap themselves about with as many fig leaves as would cover their shame, and think they want no more apparel. These, if they knew what it were to a drachm, that would serve them to attain salvation,—they would reach so far if the grace of God would assist them; but would put themselves to no trouble to purify their body and spirit any further. Here’s a pretence of desire to serve God, but with so much laziness, with so much lethargy, that the Lord disdains it as dead carrion. He would serve God, and he would serve Mammon. He approves much prayer, but he cannot attend it. He would not for all the world but be a Christian; yet a small share in profit, or a snap at a little pleasure, will pervert him to be a dishonest Christian. But real and holy desire stands up for much, though it cannot do so much honour to God as he would: like the disease ‘ephialtes,’ that oppresseth us in the night, between sleeping and waking, we would turn to the other side of the bed, and cannot. But to shake off this ‘incubus,’ it listens after all the noble exploits that the saints of God have done, and would exactly follow them; or, if it were possible, run before them: if not, it will be heartily sorry that frailty makes it come short of the best. It would compound for no less than to pay all, if it were able. Then you shall find the heart pant often with these inward yearnings: ‘Sweet Saviour, should any of thy servants love thee better than I? should any of thy disciples be more obedient than I? No, Lord, for none of thine are so much indebted to thy passion, because none had so many sins to be forgiven. How amiable are thy commandments, O Lord of hosts!

my soul thirsteth to be the nearest of them, that shall stand before the presence of the living God. Lord, let me love thee, as Peter did; Lord, let me love thee more than these !'

So I have revealed the first comforts flowing from the Holy Ghost, by his inhabitation, and inward testimony : and the next comforts by the fruits of righteousness, and those sincere desires of godliness, which, by Christ's merciful interpretation, supply our failings. All which I conclude out of our church song made to the Holy Ghost :

Visit our minds, and into us  
Thy heavenly grace inspire,  
That in all truth and godliness  
We may have true desire.





## CHAPTER IV.

PRAYER IS THE GREAT INSTRUMENT OF A CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT. CONCERNING PRAYER, THREE THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED: I. THE SUBSTANCE OR MATTER OF PRAYER, IN THREE HEADS: 1. THANKSGIVINGS; 2. SUPPLICATIONS; 3. INTERCESSIONS. II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THEM THAT PRAY. III. THE FITNESS OF TIME FOR PRAYER.

THE order laid down in the beginning carries me to the fourth part of Christian Consolation, the heavenly delight of Prayer. It is the lively expression of faith, the ambassador which hope sends to God, the comfort of love, the fellowship of the Spirit, our advocate unto our advocate Christ Jesus; our incense, whose smoke ascends up, and is sweet in the nostrils of the Most High; which promiseth such abundant success, that humility had rather conceive than utter it, lest we should seem to boast. A lowly supplicant to God never rose up from his knees, without some stirrings of gracious expectation, nor without a prophetic instinct that the mercy of the Lord was nigh at hand. Which fortunate presage Isaiah confirms unto us,<sup>1</sup> "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer." And how readily may we use this mighty ordinance of God; how soon it may be done, if we have a mind to it. What freedom have we (no man can deny it) to utter a brief prayer, and very often, if we will, in the greatest toil of business. "The tongue of the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. lvi. 7.

stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.”<sup>1</sup> It is so facile a part of religion, as he that hath a tongue, can scarce miss it. It is as easy to say “Our Father which art in heaven,” as to see heaven which is always in our eye. Every sect of pagans and idolaters were taught by instinct to fly unto it ‘extempore;’ as the heathen mariners cried every man to his god.<sup>2</sup> An atheist, falling into a sudden danger, as suppose a pistol were put to his breast, would cry out as soon to God to help him as any true believer. And he that, upon deliberation, did say there was no God, will break out into a confession, before he is aware, that there is a God, by natural impulsions. A poor whelp hath found a way to lick its own sores whole with its tongue; so when we are oppressed with misery, whether the evil of sin or the evil of punishment, we are prompted, by the natural notions of our soul, to lick the sore with our tongue; that is, to call for help from heaven. That soul which God did breathe into man, cannot shake off this principle—that all succour comes from above, for which it must breathe out itself unto God. No creature among beasts, but, being smitten, will fall upon the way to relieve itself, except a blind, incogitant sinner. Such as have written upon their sagacity in that kind, tell us, that the fishes in the fresh water, being struck with a tool of iron, will rub themselves upon the glutinous skin of the tench to be cured. The hart, wounded with an arrow, runs to the herb dittany to bite it, that the shaft may fall out that stuck in his body. The swallow will seek out the green tetterwort, to recover the eyes of her young ones, when they are blinded. Only a stupid sinner forgets how to renew his miserable estate, by throwing himself down prostrate before God in humble petition. He walks for-

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xxxii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Jonah i. 5.

ward, lost to himself, lost to his right wits, because he hath no knowledge, or no good opinion, of the comfort of prayer. Which is my purpose to make him learn, by that which follows, looking upon, First, the substance or matter of prayer: Secondly, The qualification of him that prayeth: and, Thirdly, The fitness of time when prayer is to be made.

I. The 'matter of prayer' is as copious as all occasions that can be named; it will suffice for my purpose to treat of three heads: 'Glorifications with thanksgivings, Supplications, and Intercessions.'

1. The first is bent to magnify the Almighty, to extol his name, to praise him for his goodness. This is the Hallelujah of David, and of the saints in heaven; that is, give glory to Jah, or the great Jehovah; which is followed with a rare variety in the Song of the three Children: "O, all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him for ever!" It is a ditty that is balsamed all over with a profusion of delight, to praise God from all things that he hath made, from the centre of the earth to the top of heaven. And this is most divinely expressed in that which is called St. Ambrose's Hymn in our Common Prayer: "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord." And let the servant of God that will listen unto me, repeat it often and often, for it is a piece of devotion so sweetly spread out into the branches of heavenly praise, confession of faith, and devout petitions, that the like did never come forth since the time it was penned. Let me speak to others out of the sense of my own heart, and I may safely profess, that in the service and worship of God, I find nothing so delightful as to continue in the praise and honour of the Lord. If another contradict it, and say, that there are some means more aptly calculated, as I may speak, for the high meridian of comfort; he is he, and I am I, and

I appeal from him to myself, what I find in my own motions and feelings. And "what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him?"<sup>1</sup> And observe that in the prudent institution of our church, to hold forth the consolation we have in Christ, after the participation of his body and blood in the blessed sacrament, it teacheth us to break out all together into a jubilee, "Glory be to God on high; we praise thee, we bless thee, we glorify thee," &c. For when we are full of that holy feast, and have eaten angels' food, we fall into the tune of angels, and signify immediately, before we depart, how much our spirit rejoiceth in God our Saviour.

But who knew better the mind of the Lord than the Spirit itself, in those admirable ecstasies of David? "Sing praises unto God; for it is pleasant."<sup>2</sup> "Sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely."<sup>3</sup> "Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob."<sup>4</sup> Every furrow in the book of the Psalms is sown with such seeds. I know nothing more certain, more constant, to expel the sadness of the world, than to sound out the praises of the Lord as with a trumpet: and when the heart is cast down, it will make it rebound from earth to heaven. This was the wisdom of the holy church throughout all the world, (till distempers put us out of the right way not long since,<sup>5</sup>) to solemnize the praise of our Saviour upon the feasts of Christmas, Easter, &c.; that we might celebrate the great works which God hath done for us, "with the voice of joy, and praise, and with a multitude that kept holiday."<sup>6</sup> O give thanks unto the Lord, by telling of his mercy and salvation from day to day: Give thanks unto him

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 11. <sup>2</sup> Psalm cxxxv. 3. <sup>3</sup> Psalm cxlvii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxxxi. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Alluding to the distracted days of Oliver Cromwell.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xlii. 4.

with cheerfulness, for a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful. Who is a just man, and fair conditioned, that would not pay a debt, and be exonerated of it? He that can say he hath paid what he owed, is it not a quietness to his mind to be discharged?

It goes further a great deal, and brings more advantage, when we offer up the sacrifice of retribution, the incense of thanksgiving unto the Lord; for we draw on more benefits, when we declare the goodness of the Lord upon the receipt of the old. And the gift which God bestows, is a thousandfold greater than the present which we bring. This is proposed to them that will fly high from the pinnacle of the Lord's prayer, the first petition, "hallowed be thy name."

2. Neither let them faint, that stoop low in supplication: for mercy will embrace them on every side. Two things being put together are of much weight: we pray with God's Spirit, and by his word. He invites us in his word to pray, and he gives the gift with which we pray. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications."<sup>1</sup> Did he pour upon us his grace? and have we received a commandment, the outward sign of his will? and can we suspect, after all this, that he will put us off, and deny us? Is his grace given in vain? or hath he sent his word to delude us? He hath kindled a fire in our breasts, and it is a heavenly flame that burns within us. "Lord, though we are vile and despicable, thou canst not despise the acting of thine own Spirit, nor frustrate thine own operations. Or do we come unbidden, when we cast ourselves down in thy presence? Nay, Lord, thou hast beckoned and called us: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." Hold fast to these two, and who can forbid us to be

<sup>1</sup> Zech. xii. 10.

comforted? The Lord bids us pray, and he gives us a heart to pray. For it is not strange to his mercy (perhaps it is strange to man's conceit) to give us strength to bring forth that obedience, both to will and to do, which himself hath commanded:—as he gave the Blessed Virgin strength to bring forth the babe, who was conceived and formed in her womb by the Holy Ghost.

This I do the rather enforce, because we can see no comfort in ourselves: therefore, as I derive all the virtue and spirituality that is in prayer, from the efficacy of grace,—so I refer all the success to Christ, in whom “we are blessed with all spiritual blessings.”<sup>1</sup> “Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it.”<sup>2</sup> But he and his Father are one; therefore he says, “If ye shall ask the Father any thing in my name, I will do it.”<sup>3</sup> If we had no better means to God than ourselves and our own merits, there were no hope to speed: nay, our hearts would be as faint and dead, as if we heard ourselves denied before we had opened our lips: but we conclude, as it is in the most of our collects, “through Christ our Lord.” When we bring that name in the rear, and quote him for our merit and Mediator, then I know it will be well, and the Lord will hear the petitions of his servants. Should we not put our requests into Christ's hand to offer them to his Father, Sion might spread forth her complaints, and there would be none to comfort her; and we might remain for ever in that heavy plight. “I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.”<sup>4</sup> But if we renounce our wretched selves, and imagine not the least intrinsical perfection to be in our prayers, do we sail then by the Cape of

<sup>1</sup> Eph. i. 3.<sup>2</sup> John xv. 16.<sup>3</sup> John xiv. 14.<sup>4</sup> Psalm lxxvii. 3.



Good Hope? Yes; because God is contented to yield upon such addresses. Jacob may wrestle with the angel all night, and protest he will not let him go till he have blessed him. But God "was overcome, because he would be overcome" of Jacob: he lets us prevail, because he is willing to yield: but there is no strength in us to win, if he would not suffer himself to be vanquished.

There is no other person but Christ, in whom the Father (I know not what kind of necessity to call it) cannot but be well pleased; which made him say before his disciples, <sup>1</sup> "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always:" as it is also, <sup>2</sup> "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, was heard for his piety." This is the pre-eminence of our High Priest, who is an orator for us all, that the Lord cannot reject his prayers. Therefore, committing our daily orisons to our High Priest, to bear them into the Holy of Holies before his Father, they are in a sure hand: and "they that know his name, will put their trust in him:" <sup>3</sup> much more they that know his office perfectly. Wherefore let prayer carry on these considerations with it; that we are invited by God to that duty: that the Spirit instigates us to it, and "helps our infirmities:" <sup>4</sup> that it is presented to the Father by the mediation of the Son; then how canst thou be sad, O my soul, and fear to miscarry? Is not the lot fallen unto thee in a pleasant field? and mayest thou not promise to thyself a very goodly heritage?

II. Without all dispute, then, proceed unto prayer, and for a beginning, 1. "Ask in faith;" <sup>5</sup> that is, attribute unto God that he is almighty, and can do

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 41, 42.    <sup>2</sup> Heb. v. 7.    <sup>3</sup> Psalm ix. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 26.    <sup>5</sup> James i. 6.

above all that we can ask or think : consent to his truth, that he is faithful in his promises : for he that believeth not those, makes God a liar. Acknowledge his goodness and mercy through Christ, that he will withhold no good thing from them that live a godly life. Let there be no wavering, no disputing about these attributes of God, lest we be condemned out of our own mouth. So much faith, so much efficacy, so much confidence, so much comfort in prayer.

Then will a solicitous Christian reply, 'What will become of me? I have not that plenitude of faith : at least, in sundry occasions, I have it not to ascertain myself that I shall prevail with God.' No more had Abraham himself a perfect faith without any flaw. Excellent things are spoken of him, "who against hope believed in hope : and that he staggered not at the promise, but was strong in faith."<sup>1</sup> Yet see how he stooped a little : "Shall a son be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear ! O that Ishmael may live !"<sup>2</sup> God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss in every convulsion of faith :—which appears, <sup>3</sup> "I said in mine haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes : nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplication, when I cried unto thee." You must be sure that, in general, David subscribed to the power, and truth, and goodness of God : but there was a temptation upon him at that time, in some particular case, in which he distrusted, or doubted, that there was no likelihood to prevail. But if there be such a one that says, 'I will pray, but I know I shall be never the better,' he is an infidel, and mocks God : in that bad mind he did well to say, 'he should be never the better :' for he did usurp a form of godliness, and denied the power thereof.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iv. 20.    <sup>2</sup> Gen. xvii. 18.    <sup>3</sup> Psalm xxxi. 22.

He is the right suppliant, but a very rare one, that hath no staggering or diffidence in his heart, that comes close up to our Saviour's rule, "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."<sup>1</sup> Yet the Lord will not cast them off, who are but in the next form, and do not resolutely promise success unto themselves in the instant of their present supplications: but bear it thus between faith and doubting, 'whether I shall succeed in this or that, I am not confident, but of this I am most assured, that I shall be the better for my prayers. And I would it were thus and thus, because I conceive it would be best for me: but I am certain it will be better than the best that I can imagine, which the Lord knows to be most expedient.'

Another, perhaps, may wrangle himself into an error, and say, 'How do the heathen and the wicked obtain good things, if nothing will prevail with God but the prayer of faith?' Consider that even a pagan and idolater would never pray, but that they have some kind of belief to obtain fruit by their prayers. The king of Nineveh had a solemn fast at the hearing of Jonah's prophecy; "for," says he, "who can tell if God will turn, and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"<sup>2</sup> None but a lunatic would ask for relief from him that hath neither knowledge of his case, nor power to redress it.—'O, but the prayers of such are not grounded on the faith that we speak of.' It is true: such a faith as possessed idolaters is not that which impetrates mercy from God. Then I say, neither Jews, nor Mahometans, nor wicked men, get any thing by that prayer, to which the promise is made, "Ask, and ye shall have." For whether they pray or not,

<sup>1</sup> Mark xi. 24.<sup>2</sup> Jonah iii. 9.

all that they obtain, had come to pass, though they had held their peace. It is for our sins, and to scourge us, that they have kingdoms, and victories ; it is not their motley faith that did purchase them. And for all manner of store and plenty that the earth yields to them, it is but as God gives fodder to the cattle, and meat to the young ravens that call upon him.

2. The prayer of faith, then, is only available, but out of the mouth of a humble suitor. For who will give an alms to a proud beggar ? "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity ; I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."<sup>1</sup> Let the comparison between the Publican and the Pharisee remain for ever in our memory.<sup>2</sup> The prayer of the poor destitute, the contrite, the penitent, the bleeding heart, is a sacrifice well seasoned with the salt of anguish and misery. Away with high looks and high words. "Lord, thou dost hear the desire of the humble, and dost prepare their heart."<sup>3</sup> And "God comforteth those that are cast down."<sup>4</sup> Put yourself back, who are but dust and ashes, in a great distance from the Lord, that you may behold him the better in his infinite greatness. And a lowly heart will never spare to deject the body. "O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Solomon prayed upon his knees ;<sup>5</sup> so did Daniel ;<sup>6</sup> so did Peter, when messengers came to him from Cornelius ;<sup>7</sup> so St. Paul : "For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus."<sup>8</sup> And not only men upon earth, but the glorious spirits in heaven, cast themselves and their crowns down before him that sitteth on the

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lvii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm x. 17.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron. vi. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Acts x.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xviii.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. vi. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ephes. iii. 14.

throne.<sup>1</sup> Nay, the Son of God fell down upon his knees, and prayed unto his Father.<sup>2</sup>

And fasting, which is a pregnant circumstance of humiliation, was much in use with prayer; the instances are innumerable, to signify we had no part in any comfort, nor any delight in the creatures, till we were reconciled to the Lord. So was sackcloth used; and all apparel of beauty, all ornaments of riches and pride, were put off for that time. Let them be no more than outward circumstances; yet they are significant.

But that which is a sure companion, and most intimate to humility in prayer, is patience. It breaks not away in a pet, because it is not answered at the first or second asking: that is disdainful and arrogant. It holds on, and attends, and cries till the throat is dry: "I waited patiently for the Lord."<sup>3</sup> And there must be "patient continuance in them that seek for glory and immortality."<sup>4</sup> Faith is the foundation of prayer: and, to continue the metaphor, patience is the roof. The winds blow: look to the foundation, or the building will fall. Rain and storms will descend: but if they light upon a roof that is close and compact, they run aside, and are cast upon the ground. He that expects God's pleasure from day to day, will neither faint nor fret, that his suit hangs long in the court of requests; such storms as proceed from murmuring, cannot break through a solid roof. Says Habakkuk,<sup>5</sup> A great thing will the Lord bring to pass, but not presently, for "the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come." Many diseases will never be cured well, unless they be long in curing; and many deliverances will never be thoroughly settled, unless they be long

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iv. 10.    <sup>2</sup> Luke xxii. 41.    <sup>3</sup> Psalm xl. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. ii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Hab. ii. 3.

in preparing; and many mercies are hid, like seed in the ground, and will be long growing.

I give God thanks that every blessing of worldly comfort that I prayed for, the longer I was kept from it, and the more I prayed for it, I found it the greater in the end.

Observe that there is nothing of moment, yea be it of lesser and vulgar size, with which the providence of God hath not interwoven a thousand things to be despatched with it, which requires time, perhaps seven years, to finish them. Expect, therefore, from the divine wisdom, to do all things in their order; and give honour to the Supreme Majesty to wait his leisure. "For yet a little, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."<sup>1</sup>

3. The third thing which gives assurance of comfort to prayer, is zeal, devotion, fervency, which will pluck on patience further and further. For he that is zealous in any thing will not easily give over till he have brought his ends to pass. Zeal is a continual and an earnest supplicant, it prays "without ceasing;"<sup>2</sup> prays "exceedingly;"<sup>3</sup> asks with confidence, seeks with diligence, knocks with perseverance. A swarm of bees, that is many thousands, must gather into a hive to fill it with honeycombs: and a swarm of prayers is sweeter before the Lord than the honey and the honeycomb.

Likewise it is as vehement as it is assiduous, "labouring fervently for you in prayers."<sup>4</sup> Stir up your wit, and diligence, and memory, and meditations, when you come to spread out your wants before your Father: but if you yawn out your heedless, heartless petitions, you shall depart with discouragement; as it is,<sup>5</sup> "O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 37.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 17.    <sup>3</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Col. iv. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm lxxx. 4.

be angry against the prayer of thy people?" The Laodiceans were lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, in the worship of God : therefore, the Spirit said to the angel of that church, "Be zealous, and repent."<sup>1</sup> Zeal is defined to be "a vehement and inflamed love." There must be an ardour and a flame in prayer, as if we would mount it up like fire to heaven. Then we may say, that a seraphim hath laid a coal from the altar upon our mouth, and touched our lips.<sup>2</sup> Zeal takes away the soul for a time, and carries it far above us. I write to them that have felt it, that it darts a man's spirit out of him, like an arrow out of a bow. This is it which infallibly begets hope, comfort, patience, all in a sheaf,—as they are divinely put together :<sup>3</sup> "Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer."

The transportment of zeal will excuse, or rather commend some ejaculations of prayer, which seem to be too bold with God ; as, "How long wilt thou turn away thy face from us, O Lord ! and forgettest our misery and trouble." So, <sup>4</sup> "Why shouldst thou be as a man asleep ? and as a mighty man that cannot save us ?"<sup>5</sup> And we do but follow our Saviour's pattern in it upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" Tell not a troubled heart that is in anguish, tell it not of modesty : it is a compliment it will not be tied to. The Shunamite, swallowed up in sorrow for the loss of her child, runs to mount Carmel to Elisha, and before she said any thing, she caught him fast by the feet. Gehazi thought it irreverent and unwomanlike behaviour, and laid hold to thrust her away : "Let her alone," says the prophet, "for her soul is vexed within her."<sup>6</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 19.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah vi. 7.<sup>3</sup> Rom. xii. 11, 12.<sup>4</sup> Psalm xlv.<sup>5</sup> Jer. xiv. 9.<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings iv. 27.

passions of an afflicted soul have much indulgence to break out far. They are not in good compass, till vehemency of zeal carry them beyond ordinary rule and fashion. Mary Magdalen did more than this the first time she came to our Saviour; <sup>1</sup> she came into a strange house without leave and admittance: into the house of a Pharisee, and those hypocrites would not admit suspected sinners: she takes opportunity to come at dinner-time, being a guest unbidden: she gives no salutation to the company, but falls down at our Saviour's feet, and lays her kisses thick upon them: says a holy writer to it,—it is Gregory the great, —‘Hast thou no forehead, woman? hath modesty quite left thee?’ And he answers himself; ‘that which she was ashamed of was within her;’ she was so ashamed of her sins, that she forgot all other shamefacedness. You see that zeal will pardon boldness, and will give authority to prayer to expostulate with God, and hath a toleration, as it were, to quarrel with his mercy.

Now a Christian, sensible of many imperfections, will cry out, ‘O that I could attain to some degrees of zeal! I am no Shunamite, no Mary Magdalen, no Paul, fervent in spirit. I am carried away with distractions, when I speak unto the Lord in prayer; and through the multitude of various thoughts, I forget what I am about.’ O Christ, help our frailties, and keep our minds fixed upon thee, when we ask any thing in thy name. One body cannot be in two places at once: and one heart cannot be in heaven and earth together. O let us cover our faces with the wings of the cherubims, <sup>2</sup> that we may not see enticements to distract us. Watch and pray: watch this wandering heart, that it may not be stolen away by fancies, that move in our mind continually, like motes in the

<sup>1</sup> Luke vii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah vi. 2.



beams of the sun. Defy Satan, and bid him abandon. As they that have committed a robbery, run away from a hue and cry,—so the devil will run away from the noise of your supplications, when you challenge him for sacrilege, that he hath robbed you of your devotion.

To do more yet, I will assay to prescribe a remedy to a disease, I fear, not quite to be cured. But first feel your own pulse, and your fitness for the heavenly work of prayer before you begin it. See that you be not drowsy and slothful: for a sluggard will be encumbered with various and recurrent thoughts. Neither would I have you to protract prayer to that length, which otherwise you would have done, when your mind and devotion fail you. Short and pithy prayers, collects well filled with words and matter, and not protracted till they may be censured for babbling, are more prevalent with God, when zeal doth manage them, than to spend out time without a fervent and well fixed intention. The prayers of the great saints in scripture are compendious, they are strong in sense, and speak home. A rose is sweeter in the bud, than in the blown flower: and what you abate at one time, in length, to anticipate distraction, you may fill up the measure when you will, by using them the oftener. I have known some servants of God, very circumspect in their ways, that use, for the most part, to read their prayers either printed or written, that seeing the matter of them before their eyes, they might the better contain themselves from all extravagancies. To which end, it is prescribed in the church of Rome, though a priest can say the mass by heart, yet he must read it out of his book, to keep the closer to the intention of his duty. But when all is said, happy are they that offend least in this kind, for all offend.

And whom can we blame but ourselves, that are

remiss, and not half so earnest as we should be, to prevail with God? which I demonstrate thus: let there be any thing in our prayers, which we are more eagerly set upon to obtain than all the rest, we will never start aside, nor run out of our circle when we come to that petition. 'The mind is with that, and in that which it loves.' If we did long for every member of our prayer, as much as for that special thing, which we did so eminently desire, we would continue, from the beginning to the end of prayer, with little or no diversion.

This bottom is not wound up till I give a warning to zeal, as it is,<sup>1</sup> "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Look that your petitions be modelled into such things, as the Word and Spirit do appoint, and stir you up to ask, and "you shall not be ashamed of your sacrifice."<sup>2</sup> But if you be frivolous, the prophet will tell you again, "Ye have sown the wind, and ye shall reap the whirlwind."<sup>3</sup> Or the apostle tells you plainly, "ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."<sup>4</sup> Ask for the kingdom of heaven, for the maintenance of God's glory, for newness of life, and obedience to the will of God; ask for pardon of sins in Christ Jesus, for grace in the Holy Ghost to resist temptations; ask our offended Father for mercy, to be delivered from the wrath which we have deserved: and let the seventh part of our prayer be for the things of this life, and for them with moderation, according to the station which we bear in the world, and be content with the portion allotted to you: aim by this level, and you hit the mark. What mighty blessings did fall upon Solomon, because he desired not the advantages of pomp and luxury, when God put it to him in a dream what to

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Hos. viii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Hos. iv. 19.

<sup>4</sup> James iv. 3.

ask ! He desired an understanding and a wise heart ; and “ the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.”<sup>1</sup>

3. Intercessions, that is, prayers wherein we mediate to God for others, must now be thought of, and the comfort redounding from them. The duty is strictly commanded, to pray for one another.<sup>2</sup> And “ I will that intercessions be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority.”<sup>3</sup> When we do so, we have done what we are bidden : and having done that, albeit we are unprofitable servants to God, we are not uncomfortable to ourselves. For it is the first part of the reward of a good deed, that we can say to our conscience ‘ we have done it.’ Beside, the work of love is delightful to the spirit ; and to help others in our prayers is the largest and widest work of charity, willing to do good to all upon the face of the earth, and stretching forth its hands that the whole world may be better for the calves of our lips. Chiefly commending the whole state of Christ’s church to God’s mercy, yet also (as may be seen in our Collect used on Good Friday) not forgetting to remember Christ for Jews, Turks, infidels, heretics, to take from them ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of the word : not only that the sheep of Christ’s pasture might be blessed, but that it might be well with Nero, and such as he, that were the lions who devoured us. This is charity, not only to have communion with all the saints, but compassion for all the world. Therein we follow the footsteps of Christ in his mediatorship, as far as we are able, who hath an “ unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession for us ;”<sup>4</sup> and “ who bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings iii. 10.    <sup>2</sup> James v. 16.    <sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Heb v.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah liii. 12.

Likewise it is the office of those that have great interest in God's favour, to bless others with their prayers, as the Lord told Abimelech, king of Gerar, "Abraham is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live."<sup>1</sup> So he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, and to his other two friends, "My servant [Job] shall pray for you, for him will I accept."<sup>2</sup> All Israel had been destroyed for worshipping the calf in Horeb, "had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath."<sup>3</sup> 'What!' says an old writer, 'art thou, Moses, more merciful than God? art thou more pitiful to the people than he that saves us from all evil? No,' says he, 'thou art infinite short of the loving-kindness of the Lord; but he put thy charity to the proof, to see what vehement entreaties thou wouldst make for the deliverance of the nation.' When the same people were like to be overrun by the Philistines, what course did Samuel take? Says he, "Gather all Israel to Mizpeh" (which was a proseucha, or place for public prayer,) "and I will pray for you to the Lord."<sup>4</sup> "And you shall find most victorious success upon it."<sup>5</sup> What comfortable orators are the mighty saints of God! What a safeguard it is unto us all, when they live among us! 'A wise man is the price and redemption of many fools,' says a heathen: so a mediator that is very dear to God, is a protection not only to the good, but to the wicked that are about him. Have we not cause, then, to pray for the continuance of such, that they may live long to pray for us? Should Paul need to desire the prayers of the Thessalonians?<sup>6</sup> or of the Hebrews?<sup>7</sup> Could they forget that, which so much concerned their welfare? Now the worthy servants of the Lord may prevail

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xx. 7.    <sup>2</sup> Job xlii. 8, 9.    <sup>3</sup> Psalm cvi. 23.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. vii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. vii. 10.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Thess. v. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. xiii. 18.

much one by one: others of the common rank had need to meet by hundreds, and by thousands, in great congregations, that every single man's prayer may be a drop in a shower, that while every man prays for all, all may pray for every man. So great is the opinion of good consequents from the intercession of God's servants, that infidels and ungodly, who thought it would be labour in vain to speak to God for themselves, have sued unto the saints on earth to prefer petitions for them. Darius that worshipped false gods, sent to the Jews at Jerusalem, to "pray for the life of the king and his sons."<sup>1</sup> And they that persecuted Jeremy, besought him, "Pray for us unto the Lord our God."<sup>2</sup> And Simon Magus turned himself to Peter and the apostles to intercede for him, "Pray unto the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken, may come upon me."<sup>3</sup> This is the sum, that intercession of prayer, whether active or passive, whether it be to give or to receive a blessing, is exceeding full of consolation.

2. To go in order to the next head: Who they be that shall get benefit and comfort by prayer, is quickly defined. We know that "all things work together for good to them that love God;"<sup>4</sup>—to none other, you may be sure. He that doth not truly call the God of heaven his Father, as Christ begins his prayer,—shall have no share in the portion of sons. We may intercede for profane and impenitent men, and our prayer shall return into our own bosom. But while they remain such, the mercies of the Lord will be strange unto them. They are not of the body of the mystical church, and all the fresh springs are derived unto them that are within the sanctuary. While the Jews continued under the hardness of their heart,

<sup>1</sup> Ezra vi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xlii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 28.

God discharged the prophet from appearing in their behalf: "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee."<sup>1</sup> And with no less, or rather more severity,<sup>2</sup> "Though these three men, Noah, Job, and Daniel, were in the land, they should deliver none but their own souls." And if the wicked commence a suit in their own name, the Lord will not be entreated of them. What have they to do with holy ordinances, that have no fellowship with holy practices? To come before the Lord with a lap full of sins, and a mouth full of prayers, what an heterogeneous sacrifice is it! Will the Mediator, Christ Jesus, bring it for them before his Father? "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."<sup>3</sup> "And the throne of iniquity shall have no fellowship with thee."<sup>4</sup>

Many in our land, and in our days, pray for the confusion of them that brought all to confusion; but themselves are in pursuance of notorious crimes, and rebellion against God. They would advance that government, to which we have sworn to be faithful by the oaths of supremacy and allegiance: but they make no conscience to break their oaths and covenants, which they have made to God. It is not to suppress sin, and tyranny, and injustice, that they are instant with God; but to be revenged for their own injuries and losses. Their prayers are compounded with such sins as quite mar them. So many a pair of beads have been dropt in corners for the extirpation of the protestant religion. Many a mass hath been said for the good success of Jesuitical treasons. Many a rosary was run over to bring the powder treason to its bloody birth. If they have no better stuff than this in their matins, they had as good pray to devils as to

<sup>1</sup> Jer. vii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxvi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xiv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xciv. 20.

saints. "I will that men pray always, or every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath."<sup>1</sup> Let go wrath, and malice, and bitterness. Holiness becometh the house of prayer, and holiness becometh the mouth of prayer. "If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth."<sup>2</sup> "Do justly, live chastely, give charitably, walk circumspectly, and then pray confidently." "For whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight."<sup>3</sup>

But then will the trembling Christian say, "Wo is me, for I am a great sinner; wo is me, for I am filthy, and polluted, and of unclean lips:"<sup>4</sup> then how shall I turn me to my God in prayer? O thou that fallest low upon the earth, oppressed with the burden of thy sins, stand up, and be cheerful before God: none is fit for prayer in the militant church but such an humble sinner. God draws thee, and none but those that are like unto thee, near unto his mercy. Though thy sins do cleave unto thee, be comforted that thou dost not cleave unto thy sins. Elkanah gave a more worthy portion to Hannah, that was barren, but meek and devout, than to Peninnah, that bare him sons and daughters, but was proud and scornful.<sup>5</sup> God hath heard his beloved Son, when he made prayers for sinners: he will hear those sinners that are his sons, when they ask any thing in the name of Christ.

3. Good fruit must be brought forth in a good season, which only remains to be thought upon, and to be added to the consolation of prayer. "For every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."<sup>6</sup> But neither days, nor hours, nor seasons, did ever come amiss to faithful prayer.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 8.    <sup>2</sup> John ix. 31.    <sup>3</sup> 1 John iii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah vi. 5.    <sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. i. 5.    <sup>6</sup> Eccles. iii. 1.

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice;”<sup>1</sup> which includes all the space of duration: for all time is included in ‘morning, noon, and night.’ “Pray without ceasing.”<sup>2</sup> “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.”<sup>3</sup> Short passes, quick ejaculations, concise forms and remembrances, holy breathings, prayers like little posies, may be sent forth without number on every occasion, and God will note them in his book.

But all that have a care to walk with God, fill their vessels more largely as soon as they rise, before they begin the work of the day, and before they lie down again at night: which is to observe what the Lord appointed in the Levitical ministry, a morning and an evening lamb to be laid upon the altar. So with them that are not stark irreligious, prayer is the key to open the day, and the bolt to shut in the night. But as the skies drop the early dew, and the evening dew upon the grass,—yet it would not spring and grow green by that constant and double falling of the dew, unless some great showers, at certain seasons, did supply the rest; so the customary devotion of prayer, twice a day, is the falling of the early and the latter dew; but if you will increase and flourish in the works of grace, empty the great clouds sometimes, and let them fall into a full shower of prayer: choose out the seasons in your own discretion, when prayer shall overflow, like Jordan in the time of harvest.

Keep strictly, as much as you are able, to those times of the day, which you have designed to appear in before the Lord: for then you offer up not only your prayers, but the strict observation of set times, which is a double sacrifice, and an evidence that you

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lv. 17.<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 17.<sup>3</sup> Ephes. vi. 18.



will not neglect that holy work for any avocation. He that refers himself at large to pray, when he is at leisure, gives God the worst of the day ; that is, his idle time. I account them prudent, therefore, that are precise in keeping canonical hours of prayer, as they call them, so they pray to God alone, who alone knows their heart, and so they pray "with the Spirit, and with the understanding :"<sup>1</sup> that is, in a tongue wherein they know what they say, and understand the language wherein they vent the meditations of the Spirit. This was the milk that the church of England gave every day out of her breasts, to praise God in common prayer at set hours, before noon and after, in the assemblies of her devout children. How many have rejoiced to hear the chiming of bells to call them together, and would never miss their station ! Thus "Peter and John went together to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."<sup>2</sup> O, when will these profane days come to an end, that we may again, so orderly, so delightfully, appear before the living God ?

Of one thing, the devil hath disappointed us many years past in the time of prayer, which was the night-offices of prayer, called 'vigils,' which are dis-used, because it was feared they grew incident to scandal and uncleanness. And though they be left off (I believe for good reason) in a concourse of open meeting, yet let not God lose his tribute of prayer, which should be paid him in the still and quiet opportunity of the night. The day is God's, and the night is God's ; the darkness and light to him are both alike ; let not so many hours, as run out from our lying down to our rising up again, pass away without any prayer. Says David, "O Lord, I remembered thee in my bed, and meditated on thee in the night-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iii. 1.

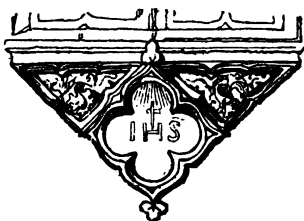
watches.<sup>1</sup> It seems, while the tabernacle of Moses stood, that the priests did some duties in it all night long.<sup>2</sup> "Bless the Lord, ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord." The apostle allowed "widows must continue in supplication and prayers night and day;"<sup>3</sup> and Anna, the widow-prophetess, "served God with fasting and prayer night and day."<sup>4</sup> The Lord hath foretold that "he will come as a thief in the night at the great day."<sup>5</sup> Therefore, O Lord, with my soul will I desire thee in the night, and at midnight will I think upon thee, and call unto thee; that if it shall be this night, even now, when Christ Jesus will come to judge the world, my soul may find mercy from him, and both body and soul may be glorified, and so continue with him for ever.

All this about the opportunity of time shall shut up with one institution of the Psalmist:<sup>6</sup> "Every one that is godly, shall pray unto thee, O Lord, in a time that thou mayest be found." When you find stirrings and impulsions more than ordinary to provoke you to prayer, follow the admonition of the Spirit, and let not such a time slip. You know not whether such a divine presage may roll in your thoughts again. I make no question but there are some critical moments, wherein God offers more than he will do again, if you neglect him, when he courts you with so great advantage. But now change the case from mine to the whole nation's, from private to public, then thus I will be peremptory in my resolution: There is no time too late for any Christian that lives, in his single person, to beseech God to be merciful to him; he may find the same propitiousness that the penitent thief did: but there may be a time too

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lxiii. 6.<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxxxiv. 1.<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. v. 5.<sup>4</sup> Luke ii. 37.<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 10.<sup>6</sup> Psalm xxxii. 6.

late to save a kingdom or a state from ruin, when the Lord hath decreed the period of it. Therefore, when confusions threaten and begin to peep out, watch them betimes, and let the whole land pray for peace, and let the governors prepare conditions for it, to avert public calamity. If you let tumults and conspiracies grow to a head, it will be in vain to struggle by monthly or weekly humiliations, when our destiny is unavoidable. Plutarch says, that a discontented person challenged the oracle of Delphos, that it never gave a comfortable answer. 'That is your fault,' says the oracle, 'for none of you come to me till your case is past help.' Therefore, awake right early; seek the Lord in the first season, that the course of misery may not wax too strong and remediless. Otherwise the prophet will say, "The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it:"<sup>1</sup> and then whither will ye fly for help to be delivered? But prevent such dismal tribulations, while it is called to-day; for nothing is more consolatory than seasonable supplication.

<sup>1</sup> Hos. ix. 7.





## CHAPTER V.

HOW THE SACRAMENTS MINISTER TO A CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT. A GENERAL SURVEY OF SACRAMENTS. FIVE REASONS WHY GOD ORDAINED TWO SACRAMENTS UNDER THE GOSPEL. WHAT COMFORTS FLOW FROM THE GRACE OF BAPTISM. WHAT COMFORTS FLOW FROM THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THOUGH by that which hitherto hath been set forth, I trust I may assume, that every one that sets his heart to make use of it, hath drunk well; yet, as the ruler of the feast said at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, "I have kept the good," that is, the best, "wine until now:"<sup>1</sup> the water of life in baptism,—the wine that delighteth the spiritual thirst in the Lord's supper. Other things in the world report unto us what a good land the Lord hath promised to his Israel; but these two sacraments are Caleb and Joshua, spies that have seen and searched the land, and bring us sensible and sure tidings that it is a noble land, flowing with milk and honey; by the grapes which they have brought with them, and by their ocular and diligent survey, they yield evident testimony that God hath provided a gracious country for us in the kingdom of heaven. To put all my work of consolation into one prospect together, prayer, the best comfortable grace, is married to hope; the Holy Ghost gives it in marriage; faith is the priest that joins them together; and the two

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 10.

sacraments are the outward signs, by which they have declared their consent, as it were, by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining of hands.

First ; I will treat of sacraments in general ; then of each in particular by itself.

“ A sacrament being a visible sign of inward grace, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof ;” or, more at large (which compriseth the end of all such outward signs), “ a token to confirm men’s faith in the promises of God :”—observe first, that God hath condescended above all expression to our weakness, that he would have us to take notice of his mercies in gross and sensible things : a way that is framed to our level and dull apprehension. “ For God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth ;”<sup>1</sup> that is purely a heavenly way. But some alterations have been admitted, to bring us forward in our own pace, that is, after human and bodily fancies. “ Deus quandoque infantilia loquitur ;” for our sakes, the Lord speaks in the Scriptures in a plain and vulgar emphasis, strangely beneath his infinite wisdom : as a nurse useth to babble to her infant, so he is pleased to give himself to our hands, to our eyes, to our taste, in common and obvious matter, but out of his surpassing wisdom, to make us more spiritual, by clothing religion in a bodily attire.

The Church began in innocency, and yet it began with a sacrament, the Tree of Life,—instituted to keep mankind on earth immortal by tasting it, if Adam had not ambitiously eaten of the tree of knowledge.

When the old world was drowned, and repaired again, God told Noah,<sup>2</sup> “ I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant be-

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. ix.

tween me and the earth, that the waters shall no more become a flood, to destroy all the earth." This is the world's covenant, and not the Church's; a covenant to save all the earth from a total deluge. And God is to be perceived, and to be thought of in that sign. The glory of the throne of God was "as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain: this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord:"<sup>1</sup> and so the same glory is figured in the rainbow.<sup>2</sup>

After this, it being not discovered who did openly and entirely profess the worship of the true God; Abraham was called out of Chaldea, and he and his family were embodied into a Church, and received the sign of circumcision, as a mark stamped upon them, to be known to be those whom God had called out for his own, and did admonish them "to circumcise the foreskin of the heart:"<sup>3</sup> chiefly to imprint into them, that the promised seed should come from that stock, in whom all nations should be blessed.

When Abraham's seed became a national Church, before they could get out of Egypt, the blood of a lamb was sprinkled upon their doors, with a statute given upon it, that from thenceforth every family, at that time of the year, should give account for a lamb slain, and be eaten within their houses, till John Baptist's Lamb was slain to take away the sin of the world.

Under the like discipline, they were trained up for a while in the wilderness, when Moses set up the figure of a serpent upon a pole, that they might look upon it, and live, that were stung by serpents.<sup>4</sup> The author of the "Book of Wisdom" writes divinely upon it. "That they might be admonished

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. i. 28

<sup>3</sup> Deut x. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iv. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Numb. xxi. 9.

for a small season it was a sign of salvation,—and he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing he saw, but by thee that art the Saviour of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Neither are we such perfect men under the New Testament, to be taught only by the words of holiness and truth, but are received into the covenant of grace, and preserved in it by mysteries signifying wonderful things to our outward senses, that we may suck, and be satisfied with the Church’s “two breasts of consolation;”<sup>2</sup> and be filled with the “two golden pipes, that empty the golden oil out of themselves.”<sup>3</sup>

I stand upon the number of ‘two,’ because they are put together: “The Israelites were all baptized in the cloud, did all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink.” As good account for it is, “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.” Or learn it from St. John: “Christ came not by water alone, but by water and blood. And there are three that bear witness, the Spirit,” that is, the ministry of the Gospel, “the water,” that is, baptism, and “the blood,” that is, the Lord’s supper. I will not promise a precise testimony out of antiquity, which shall say there are but two sacraments under the Gospel, and no more; but learned men have produced out of the Fathers as much as amounts unto it, to them that will not be contentious. Justin Martyr,<sup>7</sup> to the emperor, speaks of these two marks, or professed signs of Christianity, and no other. Tertullian against Marcion,<sup>8</sup> brings them that are married to baptism and the Lord’s supper. St. Cypria,<sup>9</sup> to Stephen,

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xvi. 6, 7.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. x. 3.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Apol.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah lxvi. 11.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Lib. iii. c. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Zach. iv. 12.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Epist. v. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Lib. ii. ep.

"Then they are sanctified, when they are born again by both sacraments." St. Cyril and St. Ambrose, writing purposely of sacraments, speak but of two. St. Austin,<sup>1</sup> to Januarius, "Christ hath subjected us to a light yoke, to sacraments of the smallest number, easy in observation, excellent in dignity; baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, and the communion of Christ's body and blood;" and if any thing else be commanded in Scripture. And many allude to that number from Cant. iv. 5: "Thy breasts are like two young roes that are twins." Here is a brief survey, how God, in all ages, hath communicated with us in sacraments.

May the reason of it be discovered? Nay, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"<sup>2</sup> Yet it is no trespass against the sobriety of wisdom to ask, why the Christian religion depends so much upon visible sacraments?

1. It is to give faith a third manner of corroboration; and a threefold cord is not easily broken. First, God hath promised us all blessings in Christ: Secondly, He gave an oath for it unto Abraham, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation:"<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, after he had pledged both oath and promise, he hath given us holy signs to confirm it. When God had both promised and sworn, durst we of ourselves have asked a sign to confirm it, to make us more believing? No, truly, we durst not; for "an evil and an adulterous generation seeketh after a sign:" it were a great blemish in faith, if we should appoint God to lend us a crutch to lean upon. But God hath prevented us herein; and, as we say in the Common Prayer, "That which for our unworthiness we durst not ask," he hath supplied of his

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 118.<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 34.<sup>3</sup> Heb. vi. 18.



own accord, and hath instituted sacred signs, wrapt up in the creatures, of most ordinary use, to make it more easy to lay hold of the hope that is set before us.

2. Secondly; Every great deliverance in God's book was accompanied with some outward sign, to make it more comfortable upon so remarkable an impression. As Moses, being appointed to be the captain to lead Israel out of Egypt, was bade to cast his rod before the people, and to let it turn into a serpent, and return into a rod again; to make his hand leprous, and whole again in an instant, by putting it into his bosom, and by drawing it out. And Moses shewed these signs in the sight of the people, and they believed.<sup>1</sup> It would be tedious to recite the stories of Asa, Hezekiah, Joash, &c. These were persuaded, by the signs of God, that he would visit them with a mighty deliverance. But there is no deliverance like unto that which is brought to pass for us through the death and bloody passion of Christ. And the two sacraments are the remonstrance of that great salvation which hath set us free out of the hands of all our enemies.

3. Thirdly; It is meet that great benefits should be fastened to our memories by a sure nail. Therefore, God, distrusting man's memory, represents his greatest works of mercy in the ordinances of manifest signs, to prevent forgetfulness. The help of some outward mark doth avail, by experience, to bring that to mind that else would have slipt away. As upon occasion, we use to tie a thread about our fingers, or to unloose the gemmal of a ring, to make us mindful of a promise, or some weighty business.

4. Fourthly; Though all our worship must hold its tenure, as it were, 'in capite,' from the Spirit, if

<sup>1</sup> Exod. iv. 31.

we hope to have it acceptable to God; yet we are better capable of such worship by the opportunity of material conveyances. Only angels and blessed souls in heaven can serve God in the pure and immaterial zeal of their mind. But while we are clothed with flesh, the mind receives all it takes in from bodily objects; and what passeth in by the pipes of the senses, it is connatural to us to apprehend with more tenacity and fast hold.

Finally; as Christ descended into the womb of his mother, to walk with us upon earth; so God hath vouchsafed to offer his word and promise to us in the creatures of the earth; setting a seal unto the word, which makes the patent very valid, and of force and comfort. For if a commandment of promise were remarkable, that of honouring our parents, "the first commandment of promise" in the second table,<sup>1</sup>—much more is a seal and sacrament of promise remarkable. Doubt not, then, but as faith is our hand to receive Christ, so the sacraments are, as it were, God's hands to give him unto us.

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### **The Sacrament of Baptism.**

BEING past the general survey of visible sacraments, it is time to enter into the consideration of BAPTISM; which God hath exalted to marvellous virtue and consolation, 'by his omnipotent appointment. The Jews, that first received it, will teach us, that they expected this new and gracious ceremony upon the coming of Christ. For "the priests and Levites sent

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. vi. 2.

to ask John, Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ?"<sup>1</sup> &c. It seems they had a tradition, that baptism should come into the Church with the Messias; which they derive, as I take it, from two of the prophets. Isaiah<sup>2</sup> states out a famous praise of Christ's kingdom; then it brings in this, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Sion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof." The other place is a plain prophecy of Christ's kingdom,<sup>3</sup> and he thus describes it: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness." John made way unto this sacrament, and it came from heaven; therefore, the "Pharisees rejected the counsel of God, being not baptized of John."<sup>4</sup> But in the fulness of the Gospel, Christ confirmed it. For he that made the promise, was the only able person to set the seal to ratify it. Except his admired doctrine and his miracles, all things else about Christ did make no show to outward appearances; so he would go no higher in the institution of an outward sign of cleansing and regeneration, than to bring the people to a river to be washed, or to a vessel of water to be sprinkled. For faith is drawn through these narrow and abject means, that, like himself, have no comeliness 'in specie;' and when we see them, there is no comeliness that we should desire them.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, it is fit we should be well taught in the contemplation of the hidden virtue enclosed in baptism, or else we could never think it worth our labour and obedience. Our Common Prayer Book a storehouse of rare divinity) tells us what is to be expected at that laver for them that come to be baptized.

<sup>1</sup> John i. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. iv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Luke vii. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. liii. 2.

1. That God hath promised to be the father of the faithful and of their seed, and will most surely perform and keep his promise with them ; and by this introduction we are incorporated into the holy congregation. Behold, they whom we love above all others by nature, our children, are naturalized to be the citizens of the heavenly kingdom, and enter into it through this door of grace.

2. Secondly ; as God did save Noah and his family from perishing by water, and safely led the children of Israel through the Red Sea, while their enemies were drowned ; so the millions of the nations whom God hath not given to Christ for his inheritance, are drowned in their own lusts and corruptions. But, O what a privilege is it to be among those few, that are received into the ark of Christ's Church, to be exempted from the common deluge, and to be the faithful seed of Abraham, led through the channel of the sea, and baptized in the cloud, that went along with them, when the armies of the mighty are mightily consumed !

3. Thirdly ; we may gather out of our church-office for baptism, that the everlasting benediction of heavenly washing affords two comforts : it signifies the blood of Christ to cleanse us '*per modum pretii*,' as the price that was paid to ransom us from death : and the sanctifying of the Holy Spirit to cleanse us, '*per modum habitûs*,' by his inbeing and celestial infusion : and both are put together in one collect, 'that all that are baptized, may receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration.' "There is no remission of sin without blood,"<sup>1</sup> says the apostle, meaning the invaluable blood of the Lamb of God.<sup>2</sup> And the heavenly thing is represented by the visible element of water : for there must be some aptitude between

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ix. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 14.

the sign and the thing signified, else it were not a sacrament;—that as water washeth away the filth of the body, so the blood of Christ delivereth our souls from the guilt and damnable-ness of sin. “The blood of Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”<sup>1</sup> The metaphor of cleansing must have respect to baptismal water. Again, “Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.”<sup>2</sup> Where the Scripture speaks of washing from sin, it must be taken from the water of baptism, figuring the virtue of Christ’s blood, that in the sight of his Father makes us white as snow. The Scriptures, indeed, strike most upon the other string, and more directly, as “Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”<sup>3</sup> “He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost:”<sup>4</sup> and in many other places. Therefore, our liturgy falls most upon the purifying operation of the Spirit, to be shadowed in the outward washing of water. As when it prays, ‘Send thy Holy Spirit to these infants, and grant that they may be baptized with water and with the Holy Ghost:’ and ‘grant that all that are baptized, may receive the fulness of thy grace.’ Spiritual regeneration is that which the Gospel hath set forth to be the principal correlative of baptism. O happy it is for us to be born again by water and the Holy Ghost! For better it were never to be born than not to be born twice.

God put a good mind into us, and reform one great fault in us; which is, that our baptism being past over a great while ago, we cast it out of our memory, and meditate but little upon the benefits and comforts of it. We are got into the Church, and do in a sort forget how we got in. Whereas the whole life of a

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 7.    <sup>2</sup> Rev. i. 5.    <sup>3</sup> Eph. v. 25.    <sup>4</sup> Titus iii. 6.

Christian man and woman should be a continual reflection how in baptism we entered into covenant with Christ, 'to believe in him, to serve him, to forsake the devil, the vanities of the world, and all sinful desires of the flesh.' Water is a pellucid element to look through it to the bottom: so often look through the sanctified water, to see what Christ hath done for you, and what you have engaged to do for Christ. And there is no heart so full of blackness and melancholy, but will recover upon it, and be as fresh in sound health, as if it were filled with marrow and fatness. Well did St. Paul put baptism among the principals and foundations of Christian doctrine;<sup>1</sup> for all the weight of faith, sanctification and mercy, doth lie upon it. Recount this by particulars.

1. The first thought that my soul hath upon it is, that I am no longer a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.<sup>2</sup> I am no more afar off, but made nigh by the blood of Christ, partaker of the privileges of the Church, and called by the new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name,<sup>3</sup>—a Christian.

2. Secondly; I find that I have gained to have the highest point of faith unfolded to me, which was but darkly discerned in the Old Testament, to confess the Holy Trinity, in which faith I was baptized. For because that mystery was revealed at Christ's baptism, it goes ever along with this sacrament: all nations being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

3. Thirdly; I observe that my Christian engagement allows me not the liberty of sinning after the custom of the world; but obligeth me to the strict discipline of my Lord, to live holily, justly, and soberly, to walk in newness of life, as planted into the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lxii. 2.

likeness of Christ's death, so to die unto sin: for "he that is dead is freed from sin."<sup>1</sup> In every thing, and at all times, I must remember what the sureties at the font, called godfathers and godmothers, did promise for me in my name; which the liturgy of Geneva retains in these words—"Do you promise to warn this child to live according to God's word, and make the law of God the square of his life to live by?" It is a binding ceremony, and we are brought up from our tender years in the knowledge of it, that we continually may feel the work of the ordinance, to have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water.<sup>2</sup> And "as many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."<sup>3</sup> To put on Christ, is to follow Christ in the law of a new creature, and to perfect holiness; without which no man shall see God.

4. Fourthly; I have assurance that the Spirit is not disjoined from the water: for God's word cannot fail, that we shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."<sup>4</sup> The power given to keep the covenant, makes it a covenant of grace: else we shall administer but the letter, and not the spirit. The outward act of man, unless we make ourselves unworthy, is certainly assisted with the increase of God. If the good effect ensue not, the sacrament doth not want its virtue, but the receiver marred it. Very much is to be ascribed to the word preached; it is a powerful means to convert us, and to save us. "Take heed unto thy doctrine, for in doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee."<sup>5</sup> And, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 7.<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 21, 22.<sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 27.<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 11.<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 15.

abideth in you."<sup>1</sup> The word disposeth and prepares : God is the efficient cause of our regeneration. Now this sacrament, whether we speak of infants, they are to call to mind how they received the outward seal of grace ; or, whether we speak of converts of ripe years, who, at the same time, were taught the virtue of it, it hath reason to work more powerfully and effectually upon their knowledge and affections, than doctrine alone ; because Christ and his benefits are manifested in a sensible operation, which himself did dignify in his own person, at the waters of Jordan, and afterward institute it to be used by his disciples.

5. The fifth thing that I draw from hence, gives me exceeding consolation in Christ, that no man who is made the child of God is in the damnable state of sin ; therefore, in baptism, being made the adopted child of God, I have obtained the pardon of all sins, original and actual ; as Naaman was cured of all his leprosy. "Who saved us by the washing of regeneration."<sup>2</sup> "Be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins."<sup>3</sup> So Ananias said to Paul—"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."<sup>4</sup> Yea, but some will cavil, 'Infants have not faith ; and God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood : and he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.'<sup>5</sup> I will not contend about it, whether baptized infants have a secret imperceptible habit of faith : I am sure there is innocency of life in them instead of faith. They that are of age to come to the knowledge of faith, must bring their own faith with them to the font : but for infants, they have privilege to be in church-communion, by the faith of the church wherein they were born. There is another contest made by some, that, 'Notwithstanding baptism, original sin

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 23.<sup>2</sup> Tit. iii. 6.<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 38.<sup>4</sup> Acts xxii. 16.<sup>5</sup> Mark xvi. 16.



remains in us all the days of our life.' True ; the sin is not blotted out in the infant, but it is blotted out of the book of God. And as actual sins are pardoned for Christ's sake, yet it cannot be brought about that they should never be done which are done and past, but it is enough that they shall not be imputed : so original sin cleaves unto us ; it is not cast out, for I feel it in me ; but it is remitted.

6. For the complement of this subject, the largest and the longest comfort flowing from the grace of baptism is, that we are to rely upon the covenant, made between God and us therein, for the remission of all our sins which we commit after baptism to the end of our life. Far be it from me to say, that it sufficeth us to cast our eyes back to the covenant then made, as if the bare and historical memory of it did suffice to blot out sins ; that is but an empty flash and a vapour of presumption. But this I say—build upon the eternity and infallibility of God's truth ; and then, by a true and sure grasping faith, joined with repentance, renew yourself in God's mercies by the promise of the old baptismal covenant. Repentance is a condition never to be omitted to lift us up again, when we have been overtaken with sins. But faith doth not comfort itself in the sincerity of repentance, which in us is ever imperfect, but in Christ's merits once for all, consigned to us in baptism. For the Scriptures speak indefinitely, that the laver of regeneration purgeth away all our sins ; it doth not speak restrictively of sins past, as if it did operate no longer than in that moment when the water is sprinkled ; for baptism doth now, at the very present time, save us.<sup>1</sup> And some collect it out of that figurative place,<sup>2</sup> " Every thing where the waters do come, shall live." After a shower of rain hath fallen, and ceaseth, the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xlvi. 9.

grass continues to grow. By grievous and presumptuous sins we debar ourselves from the sense and comfort of the covenant for the present: yet when we repent, we come not to make a new covenant with God, but to beseech him to be gracious to us for the old covenant's sake; as an adulteress, if she be received again, and pardoned by her husband, is not new married, but accepted for a wife upon the first contract of marriage.

Take some examples of those in the New Testament, that sinned against God, and in their return again did not suppose the first covenant of baptism to be abolished, but they comforted themselves that the mercies promised them would hold firm, and not fail them. St. Paul challengeth the Corinthians,<sup>1</sup> that they had been adulterers, effeminate, and much of the like. Yet he speaks thus to them, "Ye are washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus."<sup>2</sup> In the same manner he deals with the Galatians, who had embraced much false doctrine, mingled Judaism with the Gospel: yet "as many of you as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ."<sup>3</sup> Can any thing equal all these heart-refreshings that swim in the pool of baptism? Therefore, in many ages past, the joy of the neophytes was excessive that came to be baptized. Many torches were lighted, and carried before them, to shew it was the day of their illumination. They came in white garments, and wore them constantly eight days together,—a most festival habit. Yet they affected too much to defer their baptism till their elder, nay, their later years, out of the erroneous principle that baptism was the healing water for the remission of sins past: and they rather relied upon repentance than upon the baptism which they had received, for the remission of sins that did follow.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi.<sup>2</sup> Ver. 11.<sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 27.

Whereas repentance is not a new paction with God, but a return to the use of the old : a restitution, as it were, of our blood, when we had been tainted by committing treason against God : that is, repossession of mercy endangered to be forfeited. But were it a new covenant, we should have some new visible sign for it, which never was. Therefore, this is the very soul of mine and every one's baptismal consolation,—that, being once done, it seals pardon for all our sins, through Christ's blood, unto our life's end.

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### *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*

BUT, as if many spouts should open into one cistern, so all comforts conspire to meet in the sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER. Nothing else but the actual enjoying of heaven is above it. The Church, which dispenseth all the mysteries of salvation, can bring forth no better. Children that are come to age, can ask no more than the whole portion of their father's goods that come unto them : and what is that but the blood of Christ ? and this is the new testament in that blood. Christ is mine, his body is mine, his blood is mine, all is mine. "O be glad and rejoice, and give honour to the Lord God Omnipotent, for the marriage of the Lamb is come."<sup>1</sup> And the Spirit saith, write, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."<sup>2</sup> It is much to be received into the covenant with God by the former sacrament : is it not more to be kept in covenant by the other ? It is much in baptism to be brought from death to life : but what is life without nourishment to preserve

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xix. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 9.

it? This keeps us in the lease of the old covenant, that the years of it shall never run out and expire.

This is food to keep us in health and strength, that we never decay and faint. By it we lay hold of the promise,—“My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”<sup>1</sup> Then why should I not embolden my heart with holy security against all fears? for the Lord hath put himself into my hand, and into my mouth, and into my spirit: of what then should I be afraid? This is that courage which our liturgy sounds forth, as with a shrill trumpet, to all that come to this banquet well prepared. It begins, that ‘it is a comfortable thing to all them that receive it worthily;’ it bids us ‘come with a full trust in God’s mercy, and with a quiet conscience:’ it proclaims aloud, ‘Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly come unto him, “So God loved the world,” &c. “This is a true saying,” &c. It hath gathered the sallies of spiritual joy, as it were, into a bundle of myrrh. It adds, ‘Christ hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort.’ And if all this put together will not blandish our conscience, and stablish our joy, we would be dull and spirit-broken, though an angel from heaven should come and say unto us, as he did unto Gideon, “The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.”<sup>2</sup> For an angel of the Lord cannot plead so much to the solace of the heart, as the great Angel of the Covenant hath done in these great demonstrations of love, as followeth.

1. First; as baptism was the former, so this is the second, visible publication of God’s apparent mercy. It is not a bare message, but a lively apprehension of them by palpable means: not in a vision, or a dream,

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah liv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Judg. vi. 12.

but in a real object. Call to mind that the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice.<sup>1</sup> Once the Lord hath appeared unto us in the token of his love by water: and once again he appears unto us in the elements of his holy table. Twice he hath appeared to bless thee. Therefore, "eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart."<sup>2</sup> For if you turn away from comfort, when the Lord hath appeared twice unto you to give it you, he will be angry, and leave you to a thick darkness of sorrow, such as fell upon the land of Egypt.

2. Secondly; the Lord can appear comfortably unto us, though with a sword in his hand, and in the midst of a camp, as he did to Joshua:<sup>3</sup> or, in a flame of fire, as he did to Manoah:<sup>4</sup> or, in a tempest upon the sea, as he did to the apostles:<sup>5</sup> or, at the grave's mouth, as he did to Mary Magdalen.<sup>6</sup> But here he appears unto us in a feast, which is a time of innocent delight. The glory of God, which we look for, is set forth unto us in that which our senses apprehend for sweetness and pleasure: as, "I appoint unto you a kingdom—that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom:"<sup>7</sup> which is translated from bodily pleasure to spiritual, that, in the heaven of blessedness, the soul shall feed continually as at a banquet: of which we have now a taste in the kingly provision of Christ's supper. It is a kingly feast, although imparted in a little pittance of bread and wine: yet it is more costly and precious in that which it signifies, than Solomon and all his court had for their diet day by day.<sup>8</sup> We are brought to eat at the king's table, as Mephibosheth was, like one of the king's sons:<sup>9</sup> to eat together is a communion of more than ordinary acquaintance:

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xi. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Judg. xiii. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Luke xxii. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Eccles. ix. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xiv. 27.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Kings iv. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Josh. v. 13.

<sup>6</sup> John, xx. 14.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Sam. ix. 11.

do you note the endearing favour of God in that? And what are we, that are not thrust, as our kind might look for it, to gather up crumbs under the board, but to eat our portion before the Lord, with the Lord, out of the hands of the Lord? For he that brake bread, and gave it to the apostles, gives it to us, as our High Priest, though he be in heaven. I exhort you, therefore, to enter into the guest-chamber with a quiet and unshaken heart: for the Lord hath not invited us as Absalom did Amnon, to kill us; nor as Esther did Haman, to accuse us; but, as Melchizedec brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, to bless us. He gives us Asher's portion, bread that shall be fat, and royal dainties.<sup>1</sup> Only the case is altered, if Christ shall say, 'The hand of him that betrays me, the hand of him that loves me not, the hand of him that believes not in me, the hand of him that will not keep my sayings, is on the table,' that wretch shall be thrown out, and be fed with bread of sorrow and water of affliction, nay, where there shall not be a drop of water to cool his tongue.

3. Thirdly; that which astonisheth the communicant and ravisheth his heart, is, that this feast affords no worse meat than the body and blood of our Saviour. Those he gave for the life of the world, these are the repast of this supper, and these we truly partake. For there is not only the visible reception of the outward signs, but an invisible reception of the thing signified. There is far more than a shadow, than a type, than a figure. Christ did not only propose a sign at that hour, but also he gave us a gift, and that gift, really and effectually, is himself, which is all one, as you would say, spiritually himself; for spiritual union is the most true and real union that can be. That which is promised, and faith takes it, and hath it, is not fiction, fancy, opinion, falsity, but

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 20.

substance and verity. Being strengthened with power, by the Spirit, in the inward mind, Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith.<sup>1</sup> As by a ring, or a meaner instrument of conveyance, a man may be settled in land, or put into an office; and by such conveyances, the ratification of such grants are held to be real; how much more real is the gift and receipt of Christ's body and blood, when conveyed unto us by the confirmation of the eternal Spirit! For observe, "it is the same spirit that is in Christ, and that is in us, and we are quickened by one and the same spirit."<sup>2</sup> Therefore it cannot choose, but that a real union must follow between Christ and us; as there is a union between all the parts of the body, by the animation of one soul. But faith is the mouth wherewith we eat his body, and drink his blood: not the mouth of a man, but of a faithful man; for we hunger after him, not with a corporeal appetite, but a spiritual; therefore, our eating must be spiritual and not corporeal. Yet, this is a real, a substantial partaking of Christ crucified, broken, his flesh bleeding, his wounds gaping; so he is exhibited, so we are sure we receive him, which doth not only touch our outward senses in the elements, but pass through into the depth of the soul. For, in true divinity, real and spiritual are equipollent; although with the Papists nothing is real, unless it be corporeal: which is a gross way to defraud us of the sublime and soul-ravishing virtue of the mystery. "A mystery neither to be set out in words, nor to be comprehended sufficiently in the mind, but to be adored with faith," says Calvin.<sup>3</sup> But herein we pledge Christ in the cup of love; herein we renew the covenant of forgiveness strongly assured by the sprinkling of blood; the life is in the blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission of sins:—because death is the wages of sin. Sin is the greatest

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. iii. 17. <sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 11. <sup>3</sup> Lib. Instit. c. 17. sect. 5.

dishonour that can be done to God; and death in Christ's person is the greatest satisfaction that can be made. He died, and gave himself for me; he died, and gave himself to me, as he was dead in his gored and pierced body, that his sacrifice might be in me, and in all those that are redeemed by it. We read of some mothers, that, in a great famine, have eaten their own children;<sup>1</sup> but what mother, in the time of famine, did ever give her own flesh to save the life of her child? But Christ hath given himself for us, that we might not perish. 'O Lord, I owe all my life to thee, because thou hast laid down thy life for me; O let me bleed out my sins, that thy blood may fill all the veins of my spirit; O let my body be transfigured to the heavenly by cleanliness and chastity, by being used only for thy worship and service, that the body of my Saviour may come under the roof of it. Then when the King shall set forth his table, and give himself to me in his wonderful feast, my spikenard shall send forth a sweet smell;<sup>2</sup> my soul shall magnify the Lord, and my spirit shall rejoice in Christ my Saviour.'

"We have found the Messiah," says Philip to Nathanael; and where have we found him? at a feast: a feast of his own body and blood, but set out with no more cost and show than a piece of bread and a sip of wine. In this manner, it is brought to pass by the omnipotency of God's pleasure to institute it, with the efficacy of a strong faith concurring to receive it. The Church had done very ill, if, of its own head, it had made so mean a representation of Christ: but the Lord must be obeyed, and ought to be admired in the humility of his ordinance, who hath not given us rich viands, and full cups, but made the feast out of the fragments of the meanest creatures. Let them that will make themselves fit to be his guests, bring

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings vi.

<sup>2</sup> Cant. i. 12.



a preparation of humility suitable to the exility of those oblations. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied, they shall praise the Lord, and seek him;"<sup>1</sup> and at that season, let the riotous remember his fulness of bread, and excess of wine. God is honoured in a little, and his liberality is abused in the excess of his creatures. And it is worth the noting, that the elements which we are invited to take are of fruits that grow out of the earth; to shew that the earth which was cursed for Adam's sake, is blessed for Christ's sake. As it brings forth thorns and thistles to call to mind our rebellion, so it brings forth bread and wine to call to mind our redemption. Neither doth God supply us with bread only out of the furrows of the earth, but sometime it hath fallen out of the clouds of heaven. "Behold," says God, "I will rain bread from heaven for you."<sup>2</sup> This was 'manna,' called 'the corn of heaven.'<sup>3</sup> This was the spiritual meat, or angels' food, in which the old believers in the wilderness did eat Christ with an implicit faith. Our outward sign is the bread of the earth, true bread that grows in the fields; yet the bread signified is that, which the "Father hath given us from heaven."<sup>4</sup> Bread is a great part of man's nourishment; so Christ crucified is the sole refection of faith. Bread is champed in the mouth to make it fit for the stomach; so the body of Christ was ordained to be slain, before it could profit us. "If the corn of wheat fall not into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."<sup>5</sup> By his life we learn to live, and by his death we are made alive. Bread, when it is ground between our teeth, and eaten, is turned by concoction into the substance of our body; which explains our mystical union with Christ, that we are

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xxii. 26.    <sup>2</sup> Exod. xvi. 4.    <sup>3</sup> Psalm lxxviii. 24.

<sup>4</sup> John vi. 31.

<sup>5</sup> John xii. 24.

made one spirit with him by faith, as this sensible food is converted into our flesh and bone.

Beside, in the several parts of the outward signs, it is God's meaning we should conceive how he loves the gathering together of many into one, which is thus to be qualified. At a common supper, or any meal, all that are at the board feed of the same meats; yet every one feeds to himself, and to none beside; so, every communicant eats Christ to himself, and the just shall live by his own faith. Nevertheless, it is a sacrament to combine, and to knit together, holding us fast into one communion, that there may be no breaking asunder of the parts and members. Many grains of wheat are kneaded into one loaf, many grapes are trodden, that their liquor may be pressed into one cup. We, being many, are one bread, and one body; for "we are all partakers of that one bread."<sup>1</sup> Now, natural learning will teach us, what a comfort there is in union, and that fractions and dissolutions are painful and grievous. Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is! behold, what a strengthening to the mystical body to continue in one fellowship and breaking of bread, to link faith and love together in Jesus Christ! It was but one deliverance common to all Israel, whose solemnity was kept at the passover, though every lamb was eaten by itself in a several family: so, it is one cup of salvation which God hath given us to drink, though distributed to the faithful according to the multitude of persons; and it is one bread of which we do all eat, though some have one share of it, and some another. It is necessary that many pieces be broken off from one loaf, to typify the body of the Lord broken for us, and that the benefits of his passion are distributed among us.

There are many instances that are pregnant to prove how pieces of something, broken and divided

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17.

into many shares, do import a communication of somewhat among the dividers. The heathen, at the making of a league, did now and then break a flint stone into pieces; and they that entered into a league, kept the parts in token of a covenant. Some upon a contract of marriage will break a piece of gold, and the two halves are reserved by the contractors. Shall I go further, and yet come nearest to our case? The Roman soldiers parted our Saviour's garment among them, and in that symbolical accident is shewn, that the Gentiles should share in the satisfaction of his death. So Peter takes this morsel of bread,—John another, &c.; yet Christ is not divided. The same ticket, as it were, in words, in substance is put into every hand, on which is written, 'Take and eat it in remembrance of me.'

"Take it," says Christ; and be not afraid, as Saul was to take a kingdom, since Christ hath appointed it; be not afraid, as David was, to be a king's son, since such honour is predestinated to thee. Take it, and fear not, as Peter did, saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man;" it is the Lord's delight to seek and to save that which is lost. Take it, and take heed you let not go your hold; the thing is fast and firm, if you do not let it go and lose it. Take it, but not to hold the pleasures of the world, and your sinful lusts in your gripe together; if your hands be full of these things, you can never hold this. Take it, and take Christ with it; for he that made the testament in his blood, hath set the seal unto the testament, which gives you interest and possession of the redemption by his blood. Take it, and reach out your hand, to signify that you receive Christ with the hand of faith. They are too nice, for fear of I know not what, in the Roman Church, of losing a crumb, or so forth, that they put the body of Christ into the mouth of their disciples: and in pretence that they give it

as a mother doth her breast into the mouth of her child; whereas we receive this Sacrament, not as babes, but as those that are grown to the measure of a good age. And if we be not worthy to take it into our hands, we are not worthy to receive it in our mouths. Take it, and eat it; for it is not enough to be sprinkled without, but to feed on Christ, and to digest him within. If upon the supply of corn, and beasts, and cattle, Paul might say, that "God hath filled our hearts with food and gladness;"<sup>1</sup> if we are glad of that which sustains us for a time, and yet we must die; how glad will we be to eat of that, as will give us such a life that will endure for ever! 'Eat of the forbidden tree,' says the serpent to Eve, 'and you shall not die;' but he lied unto her. Therefore, to dissolve the works of the devil, our Saviour hath appointed that which we shall eat, and assured the promise of everlasting life unto it. Eat, as Jonathan did of the honeycomb, that you may be lusty to pursue your enemies; and though Satan has sworn your death, as Saul did Jonathan's,<sup>2</sup> the Lord will deliver you. Pine not away with the consumption of an evil conscience; but eat, and be strong in the Lord and in his mercy; as the spirit of the Egyptian, who was half dead, came to him again, when he had eaten a little.<sup>3</sup> Eat, and grind the bread between your teeth, to shew the Lord's death. For Christ could have said,—"*This is my body slain*,—*This is my body crucified*," but he had rather say, "*This is my body broken* for you;" to shew the great injuries of his sufferings. Eat, then, and remember you eat the body as it was broken; and remember that you drink the blood, as it flowed out of his wounds.

To keep these things in remembrance is the great design of the Sacrament; an object which keeps the fancy of the soul waking, that otherwise, it may be,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv. 17.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xiv. 44    <sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xxx. 12.

would fall asleep. In the sixth of St. John, Christ preacheth over and over of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, without a Sacrament, by the power of faith. But to keep it in fresh and frequent meditation, the Lord hath given us a palpable and signal token, as if he would engrave it upon the palms of our hands, and upon the roofs of our mouths, upon the membranes of our brain, and upon the foreskin of our heart. This is a blessing twice, and twenty times given, because it is given that it may never be forgotten. They that love others, would live in the memory of those they love; it is because Christ loves us entirely, that he would be remembered of us. And no friend will say to another, 'remember me when I am gone,' but that he means reciprocally to remember his friend, to whom he spake it. If you will remember Christ, he will remember you. And the thief on the cross will teach you, that it is good to continue in his memory; "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." O blessed Christ! thou art good, and dost good: thou hast not only provided an invaluable benefit for thy Church, but dost put it into our hands, that we may not lose it; and dost bring it into our eyes by clear ostension, that we may not forget it. We are apt to remember injuries and to forget benefits; unthankfulness will undo us, if we take not heed of it. O rub over your memory, and consider the noble works of the Lord, especially this great work, how he suffered for us unto death. Remember seriously this one thing as you ought, and God will let you forget nothing that will do you good. There is no grievous sin which we incur, but, for the present, Christ is forgotten, as if he had never come to charge us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. But look upon his wounds which bleed for our transgressions, and it will stanch the flux of sin, and make our hearts bleed, because we have forgotten obedience.

In our distresses, our sickness, and losses, we cry out that God hath forgotten us, he hath forgotten to be gracious, and shuts up his loving-kindness in displeasure. But distrust him not: a mother cannot forget her child, much less such a father. Every tribulation which he inflicts is but a thorn in our sides to prick us and awake us, because we have forgotten God.

And remember the death of Christ, not only casting your eyes back to the large histories of it in the Gospels, as if that would suffice,—but affectedly, practically, zealously: and then every thing else will come to mind to perfect holiness. When we remember his death, we are sure he is past death, and risen again now to die no more, and that he is ascended into heaven, and makes intercession for us. We have obtained that faith that we partake in the New Testament of his blood, and that, our names being found in the Testament, we are heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ. The custom of the world will teach us, that an heir is bound to execute the will of the testator, to see every thing performed that he hath charged and bequeathed. Do your part like a good executor, with a righteous administration in remembrance of him. But forgetfulness cannot creep upon us, when there is so visible a monument before us to bring it often into our thoughts. Luther says, 'It will help a man more in the study of piety, to meditate profoundly upon Christ's passion one day, than to read over all the Psalms of David.' A bold comparison: it will, indeed, ravish the soul with trembling, to consider how much Christ loved us, by how much he suffered for us; it will make us look upon sin with horror, which begat such torment and ignominy to the innocent Lamb of God; it will comfort our weak faith, that he who hath done so great things for us, will not abandon us,—and having subdued our enemies, will

not let them renew the battle to overcome us: it will encourage us to lay down our life for him; who hath laid down his life for us. "My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord."<sup>1</sup> He hath drunk up the cup of sorrow, that I might drink of nothing but the cup of salvation. This is the wine,<sup>2</sup> which, being given unto him that hath a heavy heart confutes all the objections of infidelity, despair, an evil conscience, or whatsoever the tempter can suggest against the hope of my glorification. Says the son of Sirach,<sup>3</sup> "The remembrance of Josias was as sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine." If the name of Josias was so precious for restoring religion, what melody is there in the remembrance of Christ's name, what music in his banquet, which is the very mercy-seat, from whence the voice of the Lord gives the principal oracles of consolation! whose definition I have reserved to be the last words of all: "*Consolatio est conveniens unio potentiæ cum objecto*;" as our best scholars have it, "Consolation is convenient union of any faculty with its object." As when the eye meets with light, it is the comfort of the eye; when the ear meets with harmony, it is the comfort of the ear. What is the most transcendent consolation, therefore, but the union of the soul with God, the best object, in a real and most significative manner, the union of the spirit with Christ in the sacrament of his holy supper! To whom be praise, and glory, and thanksgiving. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm civ. 34. <sup>2</sup> Prov. xxxi. 6. <sup>3</sup> Chap. xlix. 1.



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